

King, Queen back home

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on Saturday returned home after a short private visit to the United Kingdom. Their Majesties were received at the airport by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Fayez Tarawneh and senior military and civil officials.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الراي

Two SLA killed in Hizbollah bombing

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Hizbollah detonated a roadside bomb in southern Lebanon Saturday, killing two Israeli-allied militiamen. The bomb went off near the Sojod outpost of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, Lebanese security officials said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. The area is eight kilometres north of Marjayoun, the main town in Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon. The Hizbollah movement claimed responsibility for the early morning bombing, saying it targeted an SLA infantry unit. Hizbollah also fired rockets and machine guns at the Sojod outpost, the movement said in a statement in Beirut. Israeli and SLA troops struck back by opening fire on the Iqlim Al Tuffah highlands just north of the Israeli-occupied zone.

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Price: Jordan 200 fils

With over 71% in north and 94% in Republic:

Irish cast 'yes' vote for peace

Blair: It's a day for joy. I pay tribute to the people of Northern Ireland for their courage and vision

BELFAST (AFP) — In a historic step forward, voters in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic resoundingly backed a peace deal designed to end three decades of sectarian violence in the troubled province.

According to official results released on Saturday, the peace plan was approved by 71.12 per cent of the vote in Northern Ireland and 94.39 per cent of the vote in the Republic.

The deal was submitted to separate referendums north and south of the border Friday. The turnout in both votes was a record as voters delivered their judgement on the peace settlement thrashed out by the province's political parties on April 10 after two years of talks.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who helped to broker the agreement and played a key role in pushing for a "yes" vote in the last few days of campaigning, welcomed the result, but also warned of difficulties ahead.

"It's a day for joy. I pay tribute to the people of Northern Ireland for their courage and vision," he said from his official countryside residence of Chequers in England.

"I believe this is another giant stride along the path towards peace and hope in the future," Mr. Blair said. "But there is still a long way to go."

Following the agreement's resounding approval, the next step is an election on June 25 of a 108-member Northern Ireland assembly, which will form the future government of Northern Ireland.

Under the agreement, Northern Ireland is to become semi-

autonomous, remaining part of Britain but allowing Dublin a formal say in its future for the first time.

Negotiators of the accord, which sets out a new future for the troubled province, had called for a "yes" vote of more than 70 per cent in Northern Ireland as a signal that it had majority support in both the Roman Catholic Nationalist minority and Protestant Unionist majority.

Unionist extremists who campaigned for a "no" vote have threatened to wreck the deal's implementation.

"It's quite clear that a majority of Unionists have endorsed this agreement," said David Trimble, leader of the largest Protestant party, the Ulster Unionists, who is expected to become the first prime minister of the new assembly.

But the fundamentalist Reverend Ian Paisley, leader of the hardline Democratic Unionists (DUP), the second largest Protestant party, claimed victory for the "no" campaign.

"The Ulster people refused to be bullied, to be bullied, to be bought — they stood firm and we got 56 per cent of the Unionist vote," he said.

The official results did not provide a breakdown of the votes of the two religions, but exit polls indicated a massive "yes" vote by nationalists of 95 per cent and a small majority in favour among Protestants.

Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam, who won much credit for her role in negotiations leading to the agreement, said she was "delighted" with the result.



Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness celebrate at Kings Hall in Belfast with a supporter after hearing the result of the Irish referendum Saturday (Reuters photo)

adding: "The majority of both communities have said 'yes'."

John Hume, the leader of the large moderate Catholic nationalist Social Labour and Democratic Party (SDLP), said: "It's a very clear statement from our people that they want the foundations laid for lasting peace and stability."

It is a sign of the potential for trouble in the future that Paisley secured the support of five of the 10 Ulster Unionist MPs against the agreement, but it is not certain they will be re-elected for the June 25 elections.

The Northern Ireland assembly, which will elect a 12-

member executive, will operate on a consensual basis, requiring a minimum 40 per cent each of the Nationalist and Unionist sides, before measures are approved, threatening the possibility of deadlock on many issues.

Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein, political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), was in buoyant mood, however, after the outcome was announced.

He said the people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic had voted for change. In an encouraging sign, he said he hoped to see armed gangs a thing of the past.

"I think in many ways they had been ahead of the politicians and have taken a leap of faith to move the whole situation forward — I think we have to deliver on that."

After 77 years of partition in Ireland since 1921, working-class Catholic Republicans who have backed the armed struggle for a united Ireland for 30 years, have accepted compromise.

But Trimble, who is concerned that Sinn Fein will be able to join the future government without the IRA first handing in a single bullet, said he first wanted Mr. Adams to "tell me the war is over."

Rifai, Srour hail King's call for cooperation among authorities

AMMAN (Petra) — Speakers of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament on Saturday sent cables to His Majesty King Hussein hailing his meeting last Wednesday with members of the branches of government, and his call for cooperation among the three authorities.

Speaker of the Senate Zeid Rifai said in his cable that the Upper House respects the principle of co-operation among the three branches of government, the Legislative, the executive and the judiciary authorities.

"The Senate was honoured listening to your comprehensive address at which you outlined the coming phase and its requirements which should be taken into account in order to face the stage's challenges," Mr. Rifai said in his letter.

"We should make use of the past and the present in order to reach a better future," he said. "The Upper House of Par-

liament which highly appreciates your speech at which you called for cooperation among the three branches of government assures Your Majesty of its keenness and support for respecting the Constitution."

"The House voices its absolute commitment to the Constitution as part of the legislative authority and in co-ordination with the Lower House of Parliament as well as with the two other authorities: the judiciary and the executive," the Senate speaker said.

For his part, Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour expressed the House's allegiance to the King, voicing support for King Hussein's initiative to hold talks with the three branches of government.

"I, in my name and on behalf of my colleagues in the Lower House of Parliament, express my allegiance to Your Majesty," Mr. Srour said in his letter.

"Time and time again, your support for state constitutional institutions is reaffirmed as is your keenness and insistence on strengthening cooperation and interaction among these branches as well as maintaining their independence."

Mr. Srour stressed in his letter that objective dialogue is the means to promote democracy.

"This, in turn, brings about comprehensive and integrated achievements. We will undoubtedly take your directions as an approach to better promote our democratic life, hinging on objective dialogue as a means of formulating our views and perspectives."

"The Wednesday meeting was a step that accelerates our national process of construction since Jordan is witnessing diverse perspectives of pluralism that respects the opinion of the majority," Mr. Srour added.

Hajebi assured of fair trial

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A military judge on Saturday said a Jordanian living in the United States who is suspected of being involved in a recent spate of bombings in Amman would receive a fair trial in Jordan.

State Security Court Judge Brigadier Ma'moun Khasawneh said that the court did not decide whether to ask for the extradition of Majid Hajebi, who is accused of having instructed and financed the group which carried out the bombings.

Brig. Khasawneh was

responding to an interview with Mr. Hajebi that appeared in Al Arab Al Yawm daily yesterday in which the accused said that he was ready to voluntarily come to Jordan "if he receives a fair trial."

In the interview, Mr. Hajebi denied any link to the so-called "Reformation and Challenge" group which the authorities say is responsible for the five explosions in Amman.

The newspaper said that Mr. Hajebi, 36, left Jordan for the U.S. in the early 1990s and has a valid residency permit there.

Brig. Khasawneh told the Jordan Times that Mr.

Hajebi would receive a fair trial if he surrenders to the authorities.

"His name was mentioned in the interrogation of the suspects. If he wants to prove that he was not linked to this group then let him come to Jordan and testify in court," the judge said.

In 1996, Jordan and the U.S. signed an extradition treaty, which has not been ratified by the Jordanian Parliament so far.

The judge noted that the date of the trial was not fixed but said that interrogations are expected to be over "within a few weeks."

PNA calls for mass rally to protect Haram Al Sharif on 'Jerusalem Day'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian leaders called for a mass gathering at the site of Islam's third holiest shrine, the Haram Al Sharif in east Jerusalem, to stop Jewish extremists from penetrating it Sunday when Israel marks "Jerusalem Day."

"A mass gathering will take place Sunday on the Haram Al Sharif esplanade and we warn against any attempt to profane this place," the Palestinian official responsible for Jerusalem affairs, Faisal Hussein, told AFP on Saturday.

"If the Israeli authorities do not intervene to stop provocations by extremist Jews, they will bear the entire responsibility for whatever takes place," he added.

The Haram Al Sharif compound contains the Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques and is Islam's third holiest site after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

Jewish extremists have long called for the clearing of the Al Aqsa Mosque complex which they say sits atop the ruins of the last Jewish temple and prevents its rebuilding.

The official for Islamic Waqf (religious endowments) in Jerusalem, Sheikh Adnan Al Hussein, said: "Palestinians called to assemble on the esplanade will block by all means and at any price any attempts by extremists to reach it."

The calls by Palestinian officials come as Israel prepares to celebrate on Sunday its annual "Jerusalem Day" marking the 1980 annexation of the Arab eastern sector of the city after it was occupied

Jordan slams Israel's planned military parade

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan condemned on Saturday Israeli plans to celebrate its annual "Jerusalem Day" with a military parade through the Arab city and warned of its consequences.

"Israel's constant endeavour to stress the Jewishness of the city... keeps the region on the brink of explosion," said Abdullah Kanaan, secretary general of the Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs, quoted by the official news agency, Petra.

"This parade is new confirmation of Israel's violation of laws, customs and international resolutions which forbid it in 1967."

Sunday's celebration will include the first military parade in the disputed city in 25 years, during which 13,500 armed soldiers will join an equal number of civilians in a mass march through the streets of west Jerusalem.

Hundreds of policemen were being deployed around

to carry out any legal, administrative, demographic or geographic changes in occupied Jerusalem," said Mr. Kanaan.

He cited U.N. Security Council Resolution 250 which prevented Israel from carrying out a similar parade in Jerusalem in 1968.

"Israel's occupation of Jerusalem and other Arab and Palestinian lands will not achieve legality with the passing of time, and force does not guarantee the occupier will stay around forever," he added.

ian state, have denounced the parade plans as a "new provocation" by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

A Palestinian deputy from Jerusalem, Hatem Abdul Kader, said that "members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (parliament) as well leading Palestinians from Jerusalem will be posted at the

on walls calling for a demonstration on Sunday in the streets of the Old City to end "at the spot where the temple is located," a reference to the Haram Al Sharif.

Religious Jews claim that the complex was built on the site of the Jewish Second Temple, which was destroyed by the Romans in 70 BC and that the only part of the temple ruins still visible is the Wailing Wall, Judaism's holiest site.

Palestinian political factions, including Fatah and Palestinian opposition groups, also issued calls for Palestinians to mass in large numbers in the Old City and upon the esplanade Sunday.

In a statement, they called for "mosques to call the faithful to prayer and for churches to ring their bells at 13:30."

According to Palestinian leaders, the Jewish extremist group Ateret Cohanim, whose objective is to make all Jerusalem Jewish, plans on Sunday to gather 3,000 extremists in a building which it controls near the esplanade.

'Today mosques will call faithful to prayer and churches ring their bells'

Jerusalem over the weekend amid threats of Palestinian militant attacks, police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby told AFP Friday.

"We have received some warnings and will do everything possible to prevent any trouble," Mr. Ben-Ruby said. Palestinian leaders, who want to make Jerusalem the capital of any future Palestin-

entrances to the esplanade to protect it against any sacrilege.

"We have no faith in the Israeli police and we do not think they will really try to stop Jewish extremists," he added, accusing Mr. Netanyahu of wanting "to make the Holy City Jewish."

According to Palestinians in Jerusalem, groups of Jewish extremists have posted signs

Aziz arrives in Amman at the end of European tour

AMMAN (Agencies) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz Saturday arrived here from Belgium on his way back home. Mr. Aziz concluded an official visit to France, Italy and Belgium. The Iraqi official was received at Amman International Airport by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Anani.

During his tour aimed at gaining support for the lifting of U.N. sanctions on Iraq, Mr. Aziz met Pope John Paul II, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, and French President Jacques Chirac.

Mubarak ends France visit

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak left Paris Saturday for Cairo after an official visit focusing on the Middle East peace process and on ways to bolster bilateral economic cooperation.

During his stay, Mr. Mubarak warned that the Middle East could burn with renewed violence if the stalled peace process were not restarted. "It could result in total violence or give rise to terrorism," he said. The Egyptian leader blamed Israel for current problems. Mr. Mubarak and French President Jacques Chirac offered joint support for a Palestinian state and called for an international conference on peace for the Middle East.

Syrian swipes at Netanyahu, rejects offer to withdraw from Lebanon

WASHINGTON (AP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa rejected an Israeli offer to withdraw from Lebanon and took a swipe at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

"This is not a path to a comprehensive peace," Mr. Sharaa told reporters Friday after an hour-long meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. "We don't accept a unilateral or partial peace." Ms. Albright agreed that an overall agreement should be the goal of peacemaking in the region, a senior U.S. official said.

However, she told Mr. Sharaa the United States welcomed Israel's proposal to abandon its buffer zone in southern Lebanon and, as a practical matter,

"we are willing to make progress wherever we can," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Syria, which has a controlling interest in Lebanon's foreign policy, wants to recover the Golan Heights, a strategic border plateau that it lost to Israel in the 1967 Mideast war.

Past Labour governments in Israel were willing to give up the buffer zone and uproot Jewish settlers for the right peace terms. But negotiations broke down nearly 2 1/2 years ago, and Mr. Netanyahu, emphasising security concerns, has not shown interest in resuming them.

"There is not much optimism," Mr. Sharaa said of the stalemate in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

"The Israeli government's policy is the main factor," Ms. Albright last month backed the Israeli offer to negotiate a withdrawal from Lebanon. She called for direct negotiations between Israel and Lebanon on new border arrangements.

Like Syria, the Clinton administration wants to see a resumption of negotiations between Israel and Syria, too, with the goal of an overall Middle East peace settlement based on Israel relinquishing land to Syria as well as the Palestinians.

Mr. Sharaa said his government was seeking "land for peace." "We are ready to start the talks (over the Golan Heights) from the point that we finished," he said.

London auction house to sell earliest photographs of Mecca, Medina

CAIRO (AFP) — A collection of the earliest photographs of Islam's holy sites of Mecca and Medina, dating back to 1880-1881, are to be auctioned by Sotheby's in London in the first week of June.

"These photographs are the earliest known pictorial records of the holy cities," Farid Khoumgi, director of the London-based firm Egyptophilia which deals in old Middle Eastern documents, told AFP.

"The photographer, Mohamed Sadiq Bey, was an Egyptian officer who once said photographers

will burn in hell," said Mr. Khoumgi, who is selling the collection for a client who has asked for his name to be withheld.

Sadiq Bey, who died in 1902, was the first photographer ever to enter Arabia.

An engineer by training and a graduate of the prestigious Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, Sadiq was an avid explorer and a gifted photographer who received several international awards, including the 1881 gold medal at the Venice Geographical Exhibition.

Sadiq initially embarked on a military exploration,

entering Medina in 1861 and then returning to Arabia in 1880-1881 and in 1884. During his travels he compiled accurate and detailed itineraries on the pilgrimage to Mecca and drew the first complete maps of roads to Mecca.

But his work fell into oblivion because most of his narratives which were mainly destined for the military, were in Arabic and inaccessible to historians and explorers who followed him into Arabia such as the Briton, Richard Burton.

(Continued on page 3)

هكذا منذ البداية

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinian cabinet called on the United States Saturday to make public its plan to save the crumbling Middle East peace process and to publicly blame Israel for rejecting the proposals.

The Palestinian National Authority urged Washington to publish its proposals "and put the responsibility on those who reject it" the cabinet said in a statement following its weekly meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Over the past two days, President Yasser Arafat has had two telephone conversations with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the U.S. efforts to break the 14-month deadlock in the peace process and convince Israel to accept its plan.

Washington is reportedly demanding that Israel withdraw from a further 13 per cent of the West Bank in tandem with steps by the Palestinians to fight terrorism.

"Albright told President Arafat that she intends to continue her efforts to achieve progress," Mr. Arafat aide Nabil Abu Rudeina said, but added: "These efforts are not going to last forever."

Mr. Abu Rudeina said the U.S. administration could announce the results of its efforts within the next 10 days after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gives his "definitive position" on the U.S. package.

Mr. Arafat has accepted the U.S. proposal even though it falls far short of Palestinian territorial claims, but Mr. Netanyahu has repeatedly rejected the 13 per cent pull-out as a threat to its security.

The leader of Israeli opposition party Meretz, Yossi Sarid, said Mr. Netanyahu's rejection of the U.S. compromise amounted to burying the peace process.

"If the Oslo accords [between Israel and the Palestinians] are dead, it is because

Washington is reportedly demanding that Israel withdraw from a further 13 per cent of the West Bank in tandem with steps by the Palestinians to fight terrorism.

port for plans announced by Presidents Jacques Chirac of France and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt for a peace conference.

"We support this initiative,"

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Saturday for talks expected to focus on three disputed islands which control the world's main oil supply route.

Mr. Kharazi is due to meet UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamdan Ben Zayed Al Nahayan during his two-day visit, the UAE news agency WAM said.

"Our policies towards Abu Dhabi involve developing friendly relations," Mr. Kharazi said before he left Tehran.

A UAE official said earlier this month that Mr. Kharazi's talks would cover regional developments and ties between Iran and its Gulf Arab neighbours, along with the Islamic republic's dispute with the UAE over the three southern Gulf islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb.

A senior Iranian foreign ministry official told a Tehran newspaper that Iran was willing to discuss the future of Abu Musa, the only one of the three islands which is populated over which Iran and the UAE have shared control since Britain pulled its forces out of the Gulf in 1971.

"We are faced with a problem concerning the island of Abu Musa which can be resolved by direct negotiations between officials of the

tries. If Kharazi came with something new," the paper said.

"We have a real problem with Iran — it is its continued occupation of our three islands of Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs," the paper said.

Iran's insistence on discussing only Abu Musa and its demand that the dispute

Abu Musa, claimed by the UAE emirate of Sharjah, and the tunbs, which were under the control of the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, are located at the entrance of the vital Hormuz Strait, the only gateway to the Gulf.

More than one fifth of global oil supplies pass through the waterway.

BONN (AFP) — Iran's new ambassador to Germany arrived in Bonn Saturday, an Iranian embassy spokesman said, marking the easing of a recent freeze in bilateral ties.

Ahmad Azizi was appointed five months ago, but had not taken up his post until now due to a prolonged period of diplomatic tension. Ties took their first battering in April 1997, when a German court implicated Tehran's regime in the assassination of four Kurdish opponents in a Berlin restaurant in 1992.

The German ambassador and other European Union (EU) diplomats in Tehran were subsequently recalled.

Signs that the relationship between Bonn and Tehran was on the mend came with the return of the diplomats in November.

However, relations took another sour turn in January after German businessman Helmut Hofer was arrested and sentenced to death in Iran for an alleged sexual affair with a Muslim woman.

The case is being reviewed by an appeals court.

A German diplomatic mission arrived in Iran earlier this month in a bid to ease the tension.

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran hailed on Saturday Saudi Arabia's announcement ruling out any foreign participation in the 1996 bombing of a U.S. airbase in the kingdom that killed 19 U.S. airmen, following reports implicating Tehran.

"We knew from the start that the problem was internal, but evil-minded people wanted to damage Iranian-Saudi relations by insinuating that the attack was the work of Tehran," Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said.

A Saudi official for the first time Thursday acknowledged the bombing of the U.S. base in the eastern city of Dhahran "was carried out by Saudi hands."

"No foreign party had a role," Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz said in an interview with Kuwaiti daily Al Rai Al Am.

The Washington Post reported not long after the attack that the testimony of some of those arrested as well as other evidence implicated Iran.

Tehran had repeatedly denied any involvement.

PROGRAMME TWO
Tel. 773111-19

15:10	Cartoon	..... Pumpkin
15:20	Cartoon	..... The Pink Panther
15:30	.....	..... Skippy
16:00	The American Chart Show	.....
16:40	.....	..... Charlie Chaplin
17:00	.....	..... In The Wild
18:00	.....	..... French Programme
19:00	.....	..... Le Journal
19:15	French Programme	..... Science Magazine (E-M6)
19:30	.....	..... News Headlines
19:35	Life's Most Embarrassing Moments	.....
20:00	Documentary	..... A Taste of Africa
20:30	Talk Show	..... Challenges
21:15	.....	..... Drama - Renegade
22:00	.....	..... News in English
22:30	.....	..... Correll
23:15	The History of Rock and Roll	.....
23:59	Comedy	..... The Nanny
00:30	.....	..... End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

03:58	Fajr
05:39	(Sunrise) Duha
12:32	Dhuhr
16:13	Asr
19:36	Maghreb
21:07	Isha

CHURCHES

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by Department of Meteorology
There will be a gradual rise in temperature and weather conditions. Clouds will appear at altitudes and winds from northeasterly moderate. It will be relatively moderate.

Amman.....
Aqaba.....
Deserts.....
Jordan Valley.....

Yesterday's high temperature readings: Amman

**USEFUL
TELEPHONE
NUMBERS
NIGHT DR**

Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain .
Dr. Ghalib Zawaideh
Dr. Khaldoun Asfour
Dr. Bilal Al Sayyid ..
Firas pharmacy

Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	4637085
Nairouh pharmacy	4623672
Al Salam pharmacy	4636730
Yacoub pharmacy	4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	4637660
Najib pharmacy	5347632

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir	276852
Al Quds pharmacy	(-)

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad	985550
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

15/25	
34/34	Food Control Centre.....4637111
13/30	Civil Defence Department.....566111
22/32	Civil Defence Immediate Rescue.....4630341
	Civil Defence Emergency.....199
4 Humidi-	Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
7 per cent.	Fire Brigade.....4617101

Public Security Dept.....4630321
Hotel Complaints.....5605800
Price Complaints.....5661176

4623029	787111
4126011	Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
5332600	Overseas Calls 010230
890280	Central Amman Telephone
5661912	

SUPPORT FOR KHATAMI: Iranian university students in Tehran show their support Saturday for President Mohammad Khatami on the first anniversary of the moderate cleric's election to office (AFP photo)

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — Turkish forces killed 12 fighters of the separatist Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) during an offensive launched in northern Iraq, local sources said Saturday.

Several PKK rear bases in the border region of northern Iraq were being targeted in the assault, led by 15,000 Turkish troops and 2,000 pro-government Kurdish militia fighters who have been armed by Ankara.

Aircraft continued to bombard PKK positions in the regions of Hafanin, Kaniyasi and Amadiyah early Saturday.

No official confirmation of the death toll came from the Turkish authorities in Diyarbakir, where the operation is being coordinated.

Parts of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) have swung behind the Turkish army offensive against the PKK which is fighting to establish a separate Kurdistan state in the border region of Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

The Turkish army has launched similar offensives around this time each year in a bid to prevent the PKK from marshalling its resources after the winter months.

The north of Iraq has since the Gulf war in 1991 been controlled by the KDP and the Kurdistan Patriotic Union, rival groups engaged in sporadic fighting since 1994.

Police train Egyptian tour guides to handle possible attacks

CAIRO (AP) — Wary of terrorist attacks on Egypt's vital tourist trade, the government has begun training guides in tactics and self-defence, Al Jumhuriya newspaper reported Saturday.

The 10-day courses, conducted by the interior ministry, teach guides first aid, self-defence, how to determine if terrorists are tailing their buses and how to detect explosives, the paper said.

The course's emphasis on tour buses stems from a September attack outside Cairo's famed Egyptian Museum, where two armed gunmen firebombed and shot at a bus of German tourists. Nine Germans and their Egyptian bus driver were killed.

So far, just 26 of the country's 5,000 registered tour guides have graduated from the courses.

ALGIERS (AFP) — A woman was killed by a stray bullet after a concert given in Algiers by the Lebanese star Assya Al Hilani, the daily *Al-Achil* reported Saturday.

The woman, who was not named, was hit twice when gunmen in a car opened fire at security forces who were in charge of security at Thursday's event. The woman was in the middle of a crowd of people making their way home at the end of the concert in a stadium on high ground overlooking the capital.

The shooting spread panic among the concert-goers, most of them women, waiting at nearby bus stops, while security forces deployed round the stadium to hunt the assassins.

Mr. Hilani gave a first concert at Batna, in the southeast.

Meanwhile press reports said 13 armed Islamists and two civilians had been killed this week. Eight Islamists were killed by security forces on Friday in the southwest suburb of Algiers.

Three more were killed the same day at Berrouhgia near Boukadir, to the south and southwest of the capital, and three in Kabylie, to the east.

At Medea, south of Algiers, a man had his throat slit Wednesday by armed extremists while another was blown up by a bomb planted behind the door to his home.

The latest two victims bring the number of civilians killed nationwide this month to at least 44 in attacks blamed on Islamists.

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Six international aid workers have returned to the Somali port town of Kismayo to operate a hospital there, after Somali warlord General Mohammad Sa'id Hirsi "Morgan," who controls the area, appealed for their return, faction officials said here on Saturday.

The aid workers, all belonging to the Belgian wing of the medical charity, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF — Doctors Without Borders), returned to Kismayo on Friday, newspapers quoted the officials as saying.

Mr. Morgan appealed to international aid agencies on Tuesday to return to the war-torn southern port and assured them of their safety.

Kismayo, 500 kilometers south of the Somali capital, was a battleground in bloody fighting between the Majerteen and Marehan clansmen, which later intensified after other major clans joined in.

The six expatriate personnel — four Belgians, a German and a Norwegian — were evacuated on May 6 from the port, where they had been running Kismayo Hospital, leaving only Somali doctors and nurses to run the facility.

But Marehans militia officers maintained here on Saturday that Kismayo was still a battleground and dismissed Mr. Morgan's pledge to ensure expatriate aid workers' safety.

They were, however, quick to point out that they would not target the expatriates, even if

ANKARA (AP) — A judge after five people allegedly confessed to shooting a prominent human rights activist, reports on Saturday linked the attack to shadowy state death squads.

Alkin Birdal, the president of Turkey's Human Rights Association, was shot and badly wounded in his Ankara office on May 12. Authorities said Friday they arrested the two hitmen and three accomplices, including an army sergeant.

On Saturday, the daily *Hurriyet* said the sergeant was the right-hand man of a shadowy figure code-named "Green," state-paid assassin hired to kill journalists and activists who were seen as a threat to national security.

A government report issued earlier this year said "Green" had worked for the state at one time, but has since turned into an uncontrollable "death machine." Birdal, 50, is well respected in the West for his opposition to torture and the forced evacuation of Kurdish villages in southeastern Turkey. He is expected to remain in hospital another two weeks.

The interior minister, Murat Basargioğlu, said Friday the suspects confessed during initial questioning.

Police also said ballistic tests showed that guns found at the suspects' houses matched the weapons used on Birdal. The fingerprints of one suspect also matched those found at his office.

News reports Saturday said police were still searching for the mastermind of the attack on Birdal.

**Government
has referred
finalised
draft laws to
Parliament
— Ensour**

AMMAN, Jordan, Jan. 10.—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information, Abdullah Hammad, on Saturday said the government has returned to Amman to finalize its plans for the Parliament while others are still on their way to joining the Cabinet.

Speaking after a National Cabinet session, he said: "I assure you that the government respects the rights of all the citizens in light of His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the province and work which is being carried out in the building and work of the building in the spirit of peace."

The minister added that some laws, including the anti-bribe law, and the Jordan Press Syndicate law (JPS), as well as the 1947 penal law, were placed on hold pending inquiries by the competent departments.

During Saturday's session on education, the Ministers endorsed the minutes of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian meetings held in Amman, describing them as a landmark in the development of Arab-Muslim ties. Mr. Shalal, Jordan's Minister of Education, said that the Jordanian National Centre for Educational Research and the University of Jordan had agreed to support the project.

the introduction of a system for evaluating a number of government departments, he

Ensior noted that time pay to government employees costs the treasury about JD5 million annually, in addition to JD4 million per year to employees working independent semi-government offices.

According to the minister, the Council reviewed a number of topics and drafted that the government will refer to Parliament a bill concerning extradition, which is to be convened in March of next month.

Minister of Health, Dr. Kurih, briefed the Council on the outcome of the 19th meeting of the World Health Organisation and countries' health ministers.

Minister of Agriculture
Muham. Khreisshah
gave a report on his
visit to Syria.

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Government has referred finalised draft laws to Parliament — Ensour

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Abdullah Ensour on Saturday said the government has referred a number of finalised draft laws to Parliament while others are still under consideration by the Cabinet.

Speaking after a regular Cabinet session, Dr. Ensour told the press that the government reviewed the issue of enacting laws in light of His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the professional associations building last week, during which the question was raised.

Dr. Ensour said the government has responded promptly to the King's directives to speed up the enactment of laws.

The minister noted that some laws, including the draft laws on nurses and the Jordan Press Association (JPA) as well as the JPA's pension law, were delayed in response to requests by the concerned departments.

During Saturday's session, the Council of Ministers endorsed the minutes of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian meetings held in Amman recently under the co-chairmanship of Foreign Minister Juwaid Anani and Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Nabil Shaath, said Dr. Ensour.

The Cabinet approved proposals by Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez on the introduction of a new system for overtime work in a number of government departments, he said.

Dr. Ensour noted that overtime pay to government employees costs the state treasury about JD8 million annually, in addition to JD4 million per year paid to employees working for independent semi-governmental offices.

According to the minister, the Council reviewed a number of topics and draft laws that the government plans to refer to Parliament for its upcoming extraordinary session, which is expected to be convened in the first half of next month.

The minister of health, Ashraf Kurdi, briefed the Cabinet on the outcome of meetings of the World Health Organisation and Arab countries' health ministers. Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha delivered a report on his recent visits to Syria and Iran.

The Council of Ministers formed a delegation led by Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin to take part in a seminar on water strategies in the Middle East, to be held in Cairo from June 1-3.

The Cabinet endorsed a draft agreement to be signed by the Jordan Valley Authority and a local company to establish an industrial zone in the Jordan Valley.



PRINCESS VISITS ACADEMY: Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha, director of the department of women recruit affairs, Saturday inspects a section of the Royal Command and Staff Academy. Princess Aisha was briefed by academy officials on their activities and duties. She was also briefed on its future plans and programmes (Petra photo)

Balqa Applied University to be officially inaugurated Wednesday

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein, the government-run Balqa Applied University (BAU) will be formally inaugurated on Wednesday to help train a qualified workforce of specialists and technicians to meet labour demands at home and abroad.

In response to a growing number of science degree holders working in non-specialised fields and other unemployed graduates, especially community college graduates holding intermediate diplomas, a Royal Decree was issued on Aug. 22, 1996, calling for the creation of the BAU.

King Hussein named his cultural attaché, HRH Prince Ghazi, as chairperson of the university's 17-member Royal Commission and its board of trustees.

"BAU seeks to help remedy the present situation by preparing a skilled and qualified workforce that meets the requirements of the local, regional, and international labour market, producing specialists and applied technicians," BAU President Khaled Toukan told the Jordan Times.

The institution is currently providing around 16,000 students with university and community college degrees in applied vocational, technical and academic areas.

The BAU is made up of a network of community colleges spread across Jordan that once belonged to the ministries of higher education and social development but are now administratively, financially and academically run by the university.

The staff of these colleges were seconded to the BAU.

Teaching at the main university site in the city of Salt, part of the Balqa governorate, began last year with 100 students enrolled in its BA programmes and the faculties of applied sciences and engineering.

The BAU grants associate degrees/intermediate diplomas in education, agriculture, computer, hotel management, and aviation, among others.

It offers BA degrees in information technology, materials and metallurgical engineering, in engineering surveying and space geodesy.

"The associate degree programme, which is more of an intermediate diploma, is not offered by any other public university," Dr. Toukan said in a recent interview. "As for the BA programmes in engineering, they are unique as they are not offered by any other university in Jordan."

Jordan is home to seven public and 14 private universities, many of which sprang up after the government began allowing the private sector to invest in the lucrative education business in the early 1990's.

The BAU is a government university whose role complements that of other public universities by producing graduates with a more practical academic orientation and hands-on experience.

"The BAU is to fill some of the gaps by producing experts and specialists in fields which have not been tackled by other private or public universities in the Kingdom," Dr. Toukan explained.

He said the needs of the local labour market were assessed through various studies conducted on technical vocational training with the help of international bodies, namely Canada and the World Bank.

The studies also focused on areas with high unemployment for intermediate diploma holders and other fields in high demand.

These studies, Dr. Toukan said, formed the basis of the BAU's strategic plan for the future.

The male-female enrolment rate has been determined by specialisations offered at the university, he added. Some, such as the Zarqa, Ajloun and Princess Alia colleges, only target females.

"There is an evident inclination towards female enrolment in diploma programmes offered at BAU," Dr. Toukan said.

He related this to the fact that some specialisations were female-oriented, while males preferred to attend private universities.

Meeting to examine educational broadcasting to occupied territories

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates representing Arab states hosting Palestinian refugees Saturday opened a six-day meeting in Amman to examine a number of issues connected with broadcasting educational radio and television programmes to students in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The delegates, representing Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine as well as the Arab League, the Arab Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the Arab Broadcasting Union, will also discuss coordination among their

countries in organising and financing the programmes.

In the opening address, Ibrahim Badran, director general of the Palestinian Affairs Department, said Jordan's commitment to the programmes was another expression of the Kingdom's full commitment to helping the Palestinian people.

The Arab countries surrounding Israel have a duty to thwart Zionist attempts to distort Arab history and destroy Arab and Islamic culture in Palestine, Dr. Badran added.

Marwah Jaber, head of the

department of Palestinian refugee affairs at the Arab League, attacked the Israeli government's "anti-peace" policies, saying that Israel's arbitrary measures and its continued occupation of Arab lands and holy sites pose a serious threat to peace, stability and security.

Following the opening session, Dr. Badran said the meetings will focus attention on upgrading and modernising educational curricula for students in the occupied territories using advanced standards in technology and media.

Brotherhood elections expected to consolidate centrist faction

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The upcoming elections for the Shura Council of the Muslim Brotherhood are expected to consolidate the emergence of a centrist group, which has gradually distanced itself only recently from the "doves" to constitute an independent faction within the movement.

Analysts agree that the three components of Jordan's oldest and strongest movement — hawks, doves and centrists — are set to clinch an almost equal number of seats in this summer's internal elections.

"In the last [1994 Shura Council] elections, the centrists supported the doves, contributing greatly to their victory," said Ibrahim Gharalbeh, editor of the Islamist Al Umma magazine and an expert in Islamic movements. "But this year, they are determined to constitute a separate group."

Internal divisions

between the hawks, led by Hammam Sa'id and Mohammad Abu Faris, the centrists, led by Imad Abu Diah and Jamil Abu Bakr, and the doves, led by Ishaq Farhan and Abdullatif Arabiyat, narrowed after the movement's decision to boycott last November's general elections, which many say has strengthened the movement and given it more unity.

Both doves and hawks have joined ranks against the policies of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali after his government introduced tough amendments to the press law last May and maintained the one-person, one-vote system, which the Islamists criticised as targeted against their parliamentary representation.

The Muslim Brotherhood has also strongly opposed the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, the IMF-sponsored privatisation drive and corruption.

"Current government policies have made it impossible for even the

most moderate member to consider participation in a coalition government," said one moderate leader.

According to Mr. Gharalbeh, the centrists are casting themselves as a young generation of relatively liberal leaders who are "charting the movement's future strategies, borrowing firmness from the hawks and openness from the doves."

Though no date has been set, the Shura Council elections are expected to start as of the first weekend of June at some branches.

The number of members in the Muslim Brotherhood has never been revealed by either group leaders or government officials. According to recent press reports, however, only 50 per cent of members have paid their yearly membership fees, thus becoming eligible to vote. The movement is reportedly trying to ensure wider participation in the upcoming internal elections by offering "discounts" on overdue fees.

The 46-member Shura

Council, elected every four years, represents the most important decision-making body in the movement, in charge of electing the overall leader and the executive council, discussing the movement's policies and endorsing the budget.

The movement's overall leader, Abdul Majeed Thneibat, appears set to retain his office.

According to Muslim Brotherhood by-laws, candidates for the Shura Council must be active members with at least five years of service in the movement, be over 25 years of age, be "educationally and ethically" qualified to understand the principles of the Islamic mission, and should not have been arrested or convicted in the three-year period before their nomination.

The Shura Council holds three annual meetings, one every four months.

It can convene extraordinary sessions at the request of the executive committee or one-third of Shura Council members.

Delegation leaves for European-Mediterranean parliamentary meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation led by Deputy Bassam Haddadin left Saturday for Valletta, capital of Malta, to attend a European-Mediterranean parliamentary meeting.

The meeting is expected to discuss the establishment of a parliamentary forum in implementation of the Barcelona Declaration.

The projected forum is designed to strengthen ties between the representatives of Europe and the Mediterranean.

The delegation comprises deputies Sidki Shababat and Walid Awajan in addition to Adnan Mashaqbeh, a member of the Lower House of Parliament's general secretariat department.

India encouraging joint investment projects in Jordan — ambassador

AMMAN (J.T.) — India's ambassador to Jordan, Hercharan Singh Dhody, Saturday said his government is encouraging Indian businesspersons to invest in joint Jordanian-Indian industrial projects in order to help bolster bilateral relations.

In his first statement following his appointment as ambassador last month, Mr. Dhody said: "We would like to benefit from the advantages which Jordan provides to foreign investors, especially those starting projects in the Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) near the northern city of Irbid, because that zone allows investors to export products directly to American markets free of customs duties."

Industries established at the QIZ, 150 kilometres north of Amman and a 40-minute drive from Israel's industrial heart, enjoy duty-free access to U.S. markets.

Jordan and Israel signed the agreement designating the QIZ in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State

Madeleine Albright at the Middle East and North Africa economic conference in Doha last November.

The accord stipulates that Jordanian and Israeli manufacturers each contribute and maintain at least one-third of the minimum 35 per cent local content required under the Legislation and Proclamation for duty-free treatment in the U.S.

According to officials, the remaining 65 per cent can come from anywhere in the world.

Otherwise, each Jordanian and Israeli manufacturer is required to contribute and maintain at least 20 per cent of the total cost of production, excluding profits.

The ambassador cited the \$170 million Jordanian-Indian project in southern Jordan to produce phosphate-based products as an example of the joint ventures between the two countries.

More than 400 workers, including 120 Indians, are employed at the plant, which exports 224,000

tonnes of phosphate products annually, he noted.

Mr. Dhody added that Jordanian-Indian trade last year amounted to more than \$200 million.

Describing Jordanian-Indian ties as "historic," the ambassador said thousands of Jordanian students have studied in Indian universities. At least 5,000 Jordanians have graduated from these universities and are working in Jordan in the fields of technology, applied sciences, the economic sectors and other areas, according to Mr. Dhody.

He said at least 500 Jordanian students are currently enrolled in Indian universities, including some who are on scholarships in accordance with a bilateral agreement on cooperation in higher education and scholarships.

Commending His Majesty King Hussein's efforts for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, Mr. Dhody said such a peace should be based on U.N. resolutions and international legitimacy.

Jordan, Lebanon in negotiations over watermelons refused entry at Lebanese border

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Agriculture and Jordan's embassy in Lebanon are currently negotiating with the Lebanese government to permit the entry of 2,680 metric tonnes of Jordanian watermelons that were barred because the agreed annual quota had been exceeded, an official said Saturday.

"One hundred Jordanian trucks full of watermelons are stuck at the Lebanese border for the fourth day," the official, who requested

anonymity, told the Jordan Times.

"We hope that within the next few days we will solve the problem to avoid the expected losses if the watermelons are sent back," he added.

Earlier, Agence France Presse reported that the Lebanese Agriculture Minister Chawqi Fakhoury on Friday ordered that the entire shipment be barred. It added that he had refused to agree to alter the terms of the agreement.

Under the agreement, up to 4,000 metric tonnes of watermelons from Jordan

can receive duty-free access to the Lebanese market from May 1 to June 10.

The Lebanese agriculture minister was quoted earlier as saying that 4,700 tonnes of watermelons had been imported.

"We did exceed the amount stipulated in the agreement and they have the right to bar our produce," the official added.

"There is a problem of coordination because of the official holiday in Lebanon, so we have to wait."

Lebanon observes its official weekend on Sunday, while the Kingdom's holiday is Friday.

In 1997, the two countries

faced a similar problem after Lebanon barred trucks carrying vegetables from entering the country because the Lebanese market was inundated. Jordan reacted by halting a shipment of Lebanese vegetables at the border. The problem was resolved after several days.

Jordan exports vegetables to Lebanon during the winter as well as melons in the summer in exchange for Lebanese oranges, apples and cherries as stipulated by the schedule between the two countries.

what's going on

FILM

* "Ma Saison Préférée" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Weibdeh at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

SEMINAR

* "Jordan in the 1948 War and Its Aftermath" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 a.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Christian de Portzamparc at the University of Jordan, until June 4.

* Paintings by Abdul Aziz Al Hasek at Hammam An Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 5536098), until May 26.

* Spring collection of ceramic items and rugs at Beit Al Bawadi showroom, Abdoun (Tel.

5925841/5930070), until May 24.

* Photo exhibition "Frederico Garcia Lorca" and book exhibition "Lorca Translated Into Arabic" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabel Amman (Tel. 4610858), until May 25.

* "Sculpture Designs" by Jewellery Designer Suzanne El Masry and Sculptor Samer Tabba at the American Center, Abdoun, until May 25.

* Paintings by Lebanese-American artist Etel Adnan entitled "Artist's Book of Art and Poetry" at Darat Al Futun, Jabel Weibdeh, until May 28. Also displaying works by Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan Bashir entitled "A Suite of Heads," and works by contemporary Arab artists.

Local journalist detained

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Arab Al Yawm journalist Jihad Mansi was detained Friday by security forces, Editor-in-Chief Saleh Qallab said Saturday.

Mr. Qallab told the Jordan Times that police detained Mr. Mansi on an order from the Security Court.

Mr. Qallab said security forces told him that Mr. Mansi's arrest was not related to his work at Al Arab Al Yawm daily.

"We are following up on the case and we have contacted several officials, including the minis-

ter of information, the president of the Press Association, the intelligence bureau and the minister of interior, and we were promised the release of Mr. Mansi," Mr. Qallab said.

"We were told his charges were not serious and that he would be released as soon as interrogations are complete," he added.

Mr. Mansi is in his late twenties and covers local issues for Al Arab Al Yawm, Mr. Qallab said.

London auction house to sell earliest photographs of Mecca, Medina

(Continued from page 1)

The collection which Sotheby's is auctioning in London on June 4 consists of 18 photographs and two Arabic manuscripts of his itineraries through Mecca and Medina.

Only two other complete sets of photographs are known. One was donated to the Institut de France in Paris by the billionaire Schlumberger family while the other is owned by the Qazari ruling family.

Mr. Khoumgi said his client found the photographs and the manuscripts at a London bookshop by accident and then spent five years researching the pictures and Sadiq.

As a Muslim, Sadiq was able to travel at leisure in the holy cities.

It was then that he drew the first accurate map of the Haram, or tomb-mosque of Prophet Mohammad which lies in Medina.

On one of his trips, Sadiq acted as the treasurer in charge of the camel caravan taking the "mahmal" — a richly decorated wooden litter that carried a Koran, Islam's holy book, and symbolised power — to the annual Muslim Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca.

On his last trip to the holy cities, Sadiq was widowed. His wife of 34 years died in Mecca and he buried her in Medina.

The photographs show a rare insight into Mecca and Medina during the annual pilgrimage, with pictures of the pilgrims' encampments and of worshippers going around the Kaaba, the black stone which Muslims must walk around several times as part of the Hajj.

One of the shots shows Sherif Shawkat Pasha, the guardian of the Great Mosque of Medina surrounded by his three eunuchs, while another shows Sheikh Omar Al Shaiby, the guardian of the key of the Kaaba.

Sadiq sent Shaiby the photograph with a poem saying: "Your parting burns my heart. Yet aren't photographs destined to burn in fire?"

U.S. to move carefully on Latin America arms sales

BUENOS AIRES (R) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen said Saturday that Washington's new policy of selling advanced warplanes and other weapons to Latin America was unlikely to spark an arms race or military conflicts in the region.

Mr. Cohen told reporters travelling with him to Argentina at the start of a South America trip that the United States would move cautiously in exercising last year's lifting of a 20-year arms embargo against a region once peppered with military dictatorships.

He also predicted governments in the hemisphere would modernise their militaries sensibly and that Argentina, for example, should not be concerned about a U.S. push to sell F-16 or F-18 fighter jets to neighbouring Chile in a fierce competition with France and Sweden.

"What we are looking at is a Latin America that is very different from the Latin America of years past. Virtually every country is now a democracy," Mr. Cohen said before holding talks Saturday with President Carlos Menem and Defence Minister Jorge

Dominguez.

The secretary, who will travel later to Chile and Brazil for high-level meetings on his first trip to the region before flying home Wednesday, suggested that democracy and prosperity had fostered a sensibility among Latin American nations on the high cost and maintenance as well as the use of fighters, tanks and missiles.

"I would expect a rational assessment of what they need for their own individual security and, hopefully, regional security," Mr. Cohen told reporters.

"We are not trying to sell expensive, sophisticated weapons to countries that can't afford it. That is not our interest to do so."

He noted that Argentina, which has no immediate plans to buy new fighter jets because of a budget crunch, should not be concerned about Chile's expected announcement next month on what jets it will buy.

Lockheed Martin Corp., which builds F-16s, is competing with the F/A-18 made by Boeing Co., the J-39 Gripen made in Sweden and France's Mirage 2000-5 for a poten-

tial \$600 million deal with the Chileans.

President Bill Clinton made a pitch for the sale of U.S. fighter jets to Chile during talks with President Eduardo Frei in Santiago last month.

"These two countries (Argentina and Chile) have made enormous progress in reconciling their differences in recent years," Mr. Cohen said of past territorial clashes between Argentina and Chile.

He noted that both were cooperating in working to heal a border dispute between Ecuador and Peru. "They are, I think, trying to approach their security needs in a regional context. So I don't think it's a question of one country feeling that somehow any arms sale to a neighbouring country is going to put them in jeopardy," the secretary told reporters.

Mr. Cohen said Mr. Clinton's lifting of the arms embargo in what could be a lucrative military market did not mean a wholesale push to sell any weapons to every country that wanted them.

"We will examine each country on a case-by-case basis, not just a wholesale

"let's see what we can sell them," he told reporters.

"That has been the policy of the president and that will be the policy."

Mr. Cohen said his get-acquainted trip was not aimed at selling weapons and that he would discuss issues in Buenos Aires, Santiago and Brasilia ranging from concerns over terrorism to drug trafficking.

Argentina this week reinforced security on its borders and at Jewish buildings after a breakdown in relations with Iran over the 1994 bombing of a Jewish centre that killed 86 people.

Interior Minister Carlos Corach said special precautions had been taken around the "triple frontier" with Paraguay and Brazil, near the Paraguayan city of Ciudad del Este, which is thought to be a haven for Muslim extremists.

Argentina's large Jewish community experienced two bomb attacks in 1992 and 1994, which killed 119 people and injured hundreds more. Argentina has not found the culprits, but blames both attacks on Iranian-backed Muslim extremists.



Indian policemen try to bundle Tibetan protesters into a police van outside the Chinese embassy in New Delhi. More than 50 Tibetans, living in exile in India, protested against alleged killings of political detainees at Drapochi prison in Tibet earlier this month. Some 100,000 Tibetan refugees live in India under the guidance of their spiritual Buddhist leader, Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959 (Reuters photo)

Hardline Hindu minister takes charge of Kashmir affairs

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hardline Hindu nationalist Home Minister Krishna Lal Advani has taken charge of affairs in Kashmir, a state rocked by a Muslim secessionist campaign, an official statement said Saturday.

"The President of India, as advised by the prime minister, has directed that the prime minister relinquish the charge of the Department of Kashmir Affairs and L.K. Advani, minister of home affairs, will assume charge of the department," said a presidential statement.

Mr. Advani, the ideological driving force behind the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), has repeatedly blasted Pakistan over Kashmir since India tested five nuclear bombs last week.

Earlier this week Mr. Advani warned Islamabad to roll back its "anti-India policy, especially with

regard to Kashmir."

"India's bold and decisive step to become a nuclear weapons state has brought about a qualitatively new stage in Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem," he added.

Pakistan, and the U.S. State Department, have strongly condemned Mr. Advani's comments.

India and Pakistan dispute the ownership of Kashmir and control parts of the Himalayan state. New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming and training Muslim separatist guerrillas in the Indian state of Kashmir.

Pakistan denies arming the Kashmir militants, but gives them moral and diplomatic support.

More than 20,000 people have died in the Muslim separatist campaign. Kashmir has also been the cause of two of the three wars between India and Pakistan since 1947.

India edges towards nuclear compromise

NEW DELHI (AFP) — After defiantly weathering the storm of protest that greeted its show of nuclear force, India is edging towards compromises to bring the country back into the international fold.

The week after five blasts shook the floor of the Rajasthan desert, Indian diplomats have quietly pushed moderation, despite chest-thumping anti-Pakistan rhetoric from ministers in the Hindu-nationalist government.

India has softened objections to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), offered a "no first strike" pact with Pakistan and fulfilled U.S. demands for a clearcut pledge to freeze further testing.

"Now there is a moratorium on nuclear tests," said Brajesh Mishra, who runs Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's office.

Mr. Mishra said India wanted to formalise the moratorium into an "obligation" and that Indian officials were already holding talks on the issue.

Among the proposals being floated by India is a formal pact with arch enemy Pakistan, which is threatening to test its own nuclear device, that neither country will launch a first nuclear attack.

"These steps are the logical extension of the declaration that Indian nuclear weapons are only for deterrence," The Times of India said Saturday.

India has refused to publicly spell out the country's stance on the CTBT following the May 11 and May 13 tests, but official language on the treaty has become more conciliatory.

Responding to world fury over the blasts, India at first voiced long-held objections to the treaty and said it was only "prepared to consider adhering to some of the undertakings."

But India's ambassador to Washington Nareish Chandra was more positive after talks this week with U.S. officials.

Mr. Chandra said India wanted to start talks as soon as possible with nuclear weapon states to reach an agreement allowing New Delhi to "undertake the substantive undertakings contained in the treaty."

Mr. Vajpayee has been pushing India's case with influential friendly leaders such as Russian leader

Boris Yeltsin and South African President Nelson Mandela, and there are signs the diplomatic drive is reaping rewards.

Russia's ambassador to India Albert Chervashyev said Saturday his country welcomed India's show of restraint since the tests and its pledges to hold talks on the CTBT.

And he held out the prospect India could join the exclusive club of nuclear weapons states if it was prepared to give "legal" guarantees about its future nuclear conduct.

"Every nuclear weapons state has some rights. But for getting recognition it must have some obligations. Once it is ready to show these obligations by joining the non-proliferation regime, its recognition as a nuclear weapons power will follow," he said.

The United States, which reacted to the tests by demanding India immediately sign the CTBT and imposing heavy economic sanctions, also seems to have softened its tone.

After U.S. President Bill Clinton talked with Mr. Yeltsin Thursday, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said the two leaders talked about ways they could "encourage" India "to think very seriously about its international obligations."

India is one of 44 countries which must sign and ratify the 1996 CTBT within three years of its launch for it to come into force.

India objects the text only bans nuclear "explosions" but allows sub-critical and computer-simulated tests — thereby allowing proven nuclear powers to continue to develop weapons.

But following the tests India's scientists have said the country now has the capacity for both sub-critical and computer-simulated tests, leading analysts to believe New Delhi could drop objections on this front.

"If there is no need for us to conduct further nuclear tests ... we can sign the CTBT as long as Pakistan does the same," said C.V. Narasimhan, a former undersecretary general at the United Nations.

India has also complained the treaty has no time-frame for total world nuclear disarmament.

Pope's anti-abortion tirade divides Italian government

ROME (AFP) — Pope John Paul II's renewed tirade against abortion has divided Italy's ruling Socialist majority with practising Catholics lined up against ex-Communist feminist campaigners.

To coincide with the 20th anniversary of the legalisation of abortion in Italy, the Pope called upon Catholics to fight for the end of a law he said "has killed three and a half million children in 20 years."

The Italian press were quick to light upon the after-effects of the Pope's emotive cry, with the centre-left Corriere della Sera discussing the "earthquake" produced at the heart of the government, and the left-wing La Repubblica accusing the Pontiff of using "psychological terrorism."

Prime Minister Romano Prodi, a devout Catholic, has embarrassingly been caught in the thick of it but has kept a low profile

while his health minister, Rosy Bindi, whose beliefs led her to take a vow of chastity, neatly sidestepped the crux of the debate.

She put the emphasis on the parts of the abortion law which "prevent abortion" through the "promotion of responsible motherhood, the protection of high-risk pregnancies and the support of the family."

Members of her party, the Italian People's Party (PPI) — which is part of the ruling coalition — did not mince their words about the Pope's determination to stamp out abortion.

Rosa Russo Jervolino, a close colleague of Mr. Prodi and leader of the constitutional affairs committee, told Corriere della Sera that "I back 100 per cent the Holy Father's words."

But she stressed that "this is not the time to cause a crisis in the coali-

tion," PPI leader Gerardo Bianco criticised the law saying: "It has been badly implemented: there are many things to be corrected. The Pope is right."

One of the campaigners who helped push the law through parliament in May 1978 was Anna Finocchiaro, an ex-Communist and equal opportunity minister.

She countered the staunchly Catholic objections to the law, saying that to suppress it "would put lives of women in danger."

Ms. Finocchiaro pointed out that the rate of abortions had fallen in Italy by 41 per cent over the past 20 years, in spite of the dramatic statistics wielded by the Pope.

The Italian national statistics institute said that 233,000 abortions were carried out in 1993, against 138,000 in 1996. "The law is not going to

change," vowed the Minister for Solidarity, Livia Turco, another ex-Communist who joined women in Rome's central Piazza Venezia to fight for legalised abortion 20 years ago.

In his speech Friday, the Pope warned that "a society which is incapable of evaluating the richness a newly-born child brings or a woman's vocation to be a mother has no future."

His vehement attack on the law came as 12 amendments were tabled to change the legislation, most of which were put forward by the left and centre-left parties in a bid to improve the current legislation.

But these are unlikely to see the light of day noted glumly one right-wing opposition MP in Corriere della Sera, who said "the majority will not want to cause internal rifts by modifying the law."

Russian miners lift rail blockade after partial accord

MOSCOW (AFP) — Striking Siberian coal miners lifted their blockade of the main line of the Trans-Siberian railway Saturday, enabling traffic to resume between Moscow and Volgograd, ITAR-TASS reported.

The decision followed talks in the Rostov-on-Don region between the strikers and Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov, but the agency gave no details of any agreement reached.

Mr. Nemtsov had travelled to Shakhty at dawn where he asked the miners, who were demanding back salary payment, to allow freight to roll again and end the "enormous damage" the blockade was causing to the nation.

Total wage arrears due to the strikers were estimated at around 3.7 billion rubles (\$600 million).

Earlier, another deputy premier, Oleg Syusuev, persuaded miners to par-

tially lift blockades at Prokopyevsk and Mezhdurechensk in western Siberia, making rail shipments possible to the raw material-starved steel factories of Novokuznetsk.

The strike movement began a week ago when miners blocked trains on the main Trans-Siberian line at Anzhero-Sudzhensk, north of Kemerovo.

Altogether the strikes are estimated to have cost 181.4 million rubles (\$29.4 million).

Mr. Syusuev was holding further negotiations with the strikers in western Siberia Saturday morning.

Miners were also blocking other lines, and similar protests took place at Inta in the Arctic north.

All freight and passenger trains had been forced to make a 1,000-kilometre detour while the blockade remained in the Rostov area.

Six Senegalese civilians killed in pre-election violence

DAKAR (AFP) — Six civilians were killed and seven others wounded overnight Friday when gunmen opened fire on a private funeral party in the Casamance provincial capital Ziguinchor, sources said.

It was the latest and worst in a string of violent outbreaks in the run-up to elections Sunday that could end the Socialist Party's nearly four-decade grip on power.

The sources said the assailants, who opened fire as they fled after attacking a police checkpoint, were believed to be members of the independent Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC).

Elsewhere in Ziguinchor Friday night, a young girl lost a leg when she stepped on a landmine.

Thursday, gunmen shot and wounded six militants of the opposi-

Democratic Party (PDS) as they returned home after a political rally in Thiès, 70 kilometres from Dakar.

A PDS official said the attackers accused their victims of "being in the pay of the (ruling) Socialist Party."

Last week clashes between Socialist Party militants left one dead and several injured in Bambey in the centre of the country.

Some three million people will be called to the polls Sunday for elections which could end almost four decades of Socialist Party dominance.

Analysts believe the recently-formed Socialist Party breakaway, Democratic Renewal, may win enough seats to force the ruling party's leader, President Abdou Diouf, to include the opposition in a coalition government.

The PDS is the third party in the race.

Nuclear thirst quenched but water eludes millions of Indians

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India may have attained the status of a nuclear power but there are more than 10 million people in the country with no access to drinking water, a report said Saturday.

The Hindustan Times daily said that in many regions of the country people, particularly women, had to walk several kilometres in search of water.

"This is despite the fact that thousands of millions of rupees have been earmarked for the purpose and last year the allocation was \$717 million and it

covered 90,000 villages," it said.

India conducted five nuclear tests last week, the first for 24 years. The blasts provoked worldwide condemnation and global sanctions.

India, with a population of more than 960 million, is in the grip of a searing summer heatwave which has claimed more than 40 lives since the start of May, according to press reports.

As temperatures in the capital New Delhi soared to 45 degrees centigrade Friday, the hottest day of

the year, the city authorities imposed widespread power cuts and ordered a crackdown on power theft.

The state's chief minister, Sahib Singh Verma, said all consumers with faulty or tampered electricity metres would be fined heavily and hotels would be provided with only 30 per cent of power requirements.

He said all air conditioners must be registered with the state electricity board to monitor their use.

A headline in The Hindu newspaper read: "Mercury up, power down, Delhi

down and out."

The Times of India said a sole electricity board employee fled his office overnight when angry slum dwellers demanded restoration of power.

India has a peak demand of around 68,000 megawatts and a generating capacity of 81,000, although an estimated 60 per cent of that is lost through plant and transmission inefficiencies.

Trade bodies estimate the country needs more than \$200 billion in private investment by 2002 to increase power output.

Chinese media accuses India of stirring fresh tension

BEIJING (AFP) — India has continued to rub salt in the unhealed wounds of the country's neighbours this week by threatening Pakistan with the country's nuclear potential, and by calling China a hostile enemy again, the article said.

The editorial referred to remarks by Indian Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani, who repeatedly accused Pakistan of waging a "proxy war" in Kashmir this week, along with revived comments by

Defence Minister George Fernandes against China.

Mr. Fernandes had referred to China as his country's "enemy number one."

"India was once a world power. It is obsessed with the desire to be a regional and world power once again," the daily main-

tened the support of its own people.

After warming considerably in the 1980s and 1990s, ties between China and India took a nose-dive this month when India carried out five nuclear test blasts as part of a plan to develop nuclear weapons.

The two sides fought a border war in 1962, and still maintain territorial disputes over land in Kashmir and in India's far eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh.

China's responsibility to the world community, the article said, was to play a role in the world.

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Residents of this central Bolivian town are in an earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale.

Afghan Taleban cements AI

SAMARANG (AFP) — The Taleban movement in Afghanistan has cemented its alliance with the Islamic Republic of Iran, a report by the International Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence said Saturday.

The report, based on human rights documentation, says the Taleban has been training in the mountains of Iran, and that the two groups are planning to launch a joint offensive against the Afghan government.

Oregon shooting fuels media de

copycat phenom

CHICAGO (AFP) — The high school shooting in Oregon that killed a student and wounded another, has fueled a copycat phenomenon, the Chicago Tribune said Saturday.

The Tribune said that the shooting, which took place in a high school in Eugene, Oregon, was the fifth such shooting in the state since March when a 15-year-old student shot and killed a teacher in Jonesboro, Georgia.

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Residents of this central Bolivian village sit with the few belongings they were able to rescue from the rubble left by an earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale May 22. More than forty people are confirmed dead with dozens missing in the most destructive earthquake to hit Bolivia this century (Reuters photo)

Afghan Taleban chief slams AI report

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — The head of Afghanistan's Taleban Saturday condemned a recent report by Amnesty International on executions, amputations and other punishments enforced by the militia under Islamic Sharia law. The London-based human rights organisation has no right to criticise "our religious tenets and practices," Mullah Mohammad Omar told the Afghan Islamic Press by telephone from his Kandahar base in southwest Afghanistan.

Oregon shooting fuels media debate on copycat phenomenon

CHICAGO (AFP) — The Oregon school shooting has rekindled a spirited debate on whether the U.S. media may be encouraging a copycat phenomenon with their intense, graphic coverage of such tragedies. Thursday's ambush by a 15-year-old suspect that left two people killed and 22 hurt in a high school cafeteria was the fifth such incident since March when two boys, aged 11 and 13, killed four fellow students and a teacher in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Schools around the country have reported several cases of students threatening similar copycat attacks. In a move that drew widespread support from the public, The Chicago Sun-Times Friday decided to take its coverage of the Oregon tragedy off the front page, to pages 2 and 3.

"Following the series of school shootings nationwide, we see a danger that prominent reports of each successive incident could be contributing to the phenomenon," the daily said. "We do not wish to encourage any unstable teenager to think of shooting as a way out of adolescent torments. And we do not wish to alarm smaller children."

"It was a case of balancing our responsibility to report against our responsibility to society as a whole," said Sun-Times editor Nigel Wade.

While some rare cynics dismissed the move as a publicity stunt of absolute consequence, many commentators and radio callers said it had the merit of generating a salutary debate on the moral dilemma posed by media coverage of school violence. Reed Irvine, chairman of the Washington-based Accuracy in Media group, said toning down relentless

Canada welcomes U.S. intention to sign landmine treaty

OTTAWA (AFP) — Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy welcomed reports the United States intended to sign an international treaty banning the use of landmines by 2003, as long as the Pentagon comes up with an alternative weapon.

A total of 123 countries worldwide, excluding the United States, signed the treaty in December in Ottawa. The U.S. intention "sends a clear signal to the hold-out states that the issue is not if, but when, countries should sign," Mr. Axworthy said last Friday.

U.S. ambassador weds Vietnamese-born woman in Hanoi

HANOI (AFP) — Pete Peterson, a former prisoner of war and the first U.S. ambassador to Hanoi, married a Vietnamese-born Australian here Saturday.

Mr. Peterson, 62, and Vi Le, a 41-year-old Australian diplomat, exchanged vows in the French-built Saint Thomas Cathedral in front of more than 450 people who braved 40 degree Celsius temperatures.

It was the first time two foreigners had been married in a church in Hanoi since the French were defeated in 1954. Guests and friends of the couple said the marriage symbolised the forging of ties between former enemy nations.

The fact that they were married in Vietnam is a wonderful symbol of renewed relations between the United States and Vietnam," said Chuck Searcy, a close friend of Mr. Peterson's and director of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation.

Death toll from Malawi's worst train accident at 21

BLANTYRE (AFP) — The death toll in Malawi's worst train accident rose to 21 Saturday following the retrieval of one more body trapped under the wreckage of a wagon.

Police and hospital authorities still fear the toll could rise from some of the more

Earthquake in Bolivia destroys 2 Andean towns, kills at least 52

COCHABAMBA, Bolivia (AFP) — Survivors of the worst earthquake in Bolivia this century huddled in makeshift camps here Saturday after the tumbler devastated two Andean villages and killed at least 52 people. The powerful earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale hit at around 1:00 a.m. (0500 GMT) Friday, striking the colonial towns of Totora and Aiquile.

Some 200 people were missing and 1,500 were left homeless, according to government officials.

About 200 people were injured in the quake and most were brought to this central Bolivian city by the busload for treatment at the local hospital.

"My children, where are my children?" cried Elizabeth Torricos, 30, as she was admitted to the emergency room of the Viedma hospital.

Doctors and nurses at the hospital pleaded for medical supplies and medicines to treat the endless flow of injured.

President Hugo Banzer travelled to Aiquile and told survivors who congregated in the rubble remains of main square that his government would help them repair their lives.

"Do not feel neglected or abandoned, because the government has been working for you," Mr. Banzer told the survivors, who spent the night in hastily pitched tents brought by rescue workers.

Many of the one- and two-storey mud buildings in Aiquile were reduced to debris by the quake, while the nearby farming and ranching town of Totora virtually disappeared into huge cracks in the earth.

Sixteen townspeople were killed in Totora and 32 people in Aiquile, officials said.

In Aiquile, 170 houses have collapsed and imprisoned many people, including many children, said Captain Antonio Franco of the Civil Defence Agency.

More than 10 buses carrying hundreds of passengers were trapped under tonnes

of earth when a hill collapsed onto a roadway outside Aiquile, Radio Fides reported.

The government mobilised airborne rescue squads from Cochabamba and rescue workers were being parachuted into the area. Heavy machinery was brought in to clear the road and evacuate the wounded to hospitals in Cochabamba, the provincial capital.

However doctors at the Viedma hospital here feared they did not have the capacity to treat all the injured.

"We are doing everything we can so that these people don't die on us here, but we lack many things," explained a nervous physician, who said he was desperate for anaesthesia and pain killers to treat his patients.

Some of the wounded did not even make it to the hospital.

As night fell late Friday, Radio Panamericana reported that residents of the destroyed towns "transported in dump trucks at least

37 wounded people who have not yet received help of any kind."

In all, 178 quakes and aftershocks rattled the provinces of Cochabamba, La Paz, Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca in a 12-hour period, the private San Calixto Observatory in La Paz reported. But only the province of Cochabamba suffered damage and casualties.

The U.S. Geological Survey in Golden, Colorado, said the quake epicentre was located 75 kilometres east of here.

The San Calixto observatory said the worst quake this century previously was at the southern town of Tupiza in May 1909 that registered 6.1 on the Richter scale.

In 1889, a quake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale shook Yacuiba on Bolivia's border with Argentina.

Finance Minister Edgar Millares said in La Paz the government would spend 30 million bolivianos (\$5.5 million) to help rebuild the villages.

NATO dismisses report of Bosnia child prostitution

MADRID (R) — Spain's spy service uncovered a child prostitution ring in Bosnia run by NATO peacekeeping troops, a newspaper reported Saturday, but the alliance's secretary-general dismissed the claims as groundless.

The Spanish daily El Mundo cited unnamed sources as saying the ring, controlled mostly by Italian soldiers in league with a Bosnian crime gang, was discovered nearly a year ago by military intelligence agents but has continued operating.

The newspaper reported that girls between the ages of 12 and 14 had been forced into prostitution in Sarajevo for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation-led Stabilisation Force's Northern Brigade, which is

under Italian command.

But NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana, attending a meeting of the North Atlantic assembly in Barcelona, said he had spoken to officials at the Spanish defence ministry and was told that "everything that has been published is lacking in any foundation."

"I will stay in contact with the Spanish government," Mr. Solana, a former Spanish foreign minister, told reporters after delivering a speech to NATO's parliamentary wing.

"There is not enough information to support any of these reports."

El Mundo said Javier Calderon, director of the service CESID, received a full report last July from agents

who had been sent to Bosnia to investigate.

The report detailed how Bosnian children, drawn into prostitution with threats and promises of money, were taken after dark to the brigade's headquarters and forced to have sex with soldiers and non-commissioned officers, the newspaper said.

Most of the troops involved belonged to the Italian contingent but Portuguese and Egyptian soldiers also occasionally used the child prostitutes, the CESID report was citing as saying.

The girls were rarely paid more than \$25 per soldier but it was a large sum compared to the low salaries in the economically troubled region, El Mundo reported.

The alleged ring was also controlled by the so-called

Zanyar mafia, which during the Bosnian war earned substantial profits through black-market sales of gas, food, tobacco and drugs, El Mundo reported.

CESID agents learned the alleged prostitution ring began operating in 1996, just months after the Italian army contributed troops to the force sent to maintain order in Bosnia under the Dayton peace accords, the newspaper said.

The parents of some of the children found out what was happening and informed the general commanding the brigade, El Mundo cited one source as saying.

"For some months, the visits by the children stopped," the source told the newspaper. "But at the beginning of 1997, it started again."

Kazakh film wins Cannes award

CANNES, France (AFP) — The young Kazakh filmmaker Darezhan Omirbaev won a sponsored award for best film in the non-competitive "Certain Regard" section of the Cannes Film Festival Saturday, for his bleak view of post-Soviet life in his homeland, "Killer".

The "Fondation-Gan" prize of 200,000 francs (\$35,000) will be devoted to distributing the film, Omirbaev's third feature after "Kairat" (1993) and "Kardiogramma" (1995), in France.

"Killer" is a sad parable, spare in the manner of Robert Bresson, in which a young chauffeur in the Kazakh capital

Almaty experiences a series of misfortunes beginning with a road accident, until he is faced with the prospect of carrying out a contract killing in order to pay off his debts.

It makes clear the pressures facing the peoples of the former Soviet Union as traditional values and structures collapse under the combined weight of market pressures and mafia politics.

Omiraev was unable to come to Cannes to receive his award, remaining in Kazakhstan where his wife is about to have a child. His leading actor, Talgat Asatov, was reportedly unemployed after the completion of the film.

Frenchwoman robbed in Moscow luxury hotel

MOSCOW (AFP) — A French businesswoman was beaten up and robbed at Moscow's luxury Metropole Hotel, situated just two minutes' walk from the Kremlin, the Russian press reported Saturday.

Publisher Marie-Ange Dezelles, 49, woke to see three men rifling through a chest of drawers in her fourth-floor hotel bedroom overnight Tuesday.

She screamed and chased after the men who

turned on her, beating her up before fleeing with gold jewellery and \$1,500 in cash, said the reports.

Ms. Dezelles was taken to hospital with slight head injuries and left for France the next day.

Irina Volkova, director of the hotel, one of Moscow's finest, told the English-language daily Moscow Times that the incident, the first of its kind, was "serious" and would be investigated.

March against child labour reaches Paris

PARIS (AFP) — A party of children and adults taking part in a worldwide protest march against child labour, were due to arrive in Paris Saturday after crossing Africa from south to north.

The group, comprising a score of children from India, Brazil and Bangladesh and members of non-governmental organisations, set out from Cape Town in South Africa on March 20.

Another group left Manila in the Philippines on Jan. 17, to cross Asia and a third party set off from Sao Paulo in Brazil on Feb. 25. Part of the group has been criss-crossing Latin America, while others are moving round the United States.

All the groups will converge on Geneva at the beginning of June with the aim of putting pressure on governments in the International Labour Office, which will be studying a draft convention against "extreme" forms of child labour.

France has reserved a high-profile welcome for the marchers, including a meeting Saturday with President Jacques Chirac and visits to

UNESCO and the new Stade de France stadium north of Paris, built specially for the Football World Cup. Sunday, they are due to meet members of the National Assembly.

Monday, they have meetings lined up at the labour ministry with Labour Minister Martine Aubry and trade union officials.

The march was organised at the initiative of a group of associations based in New Delhi, headed by the Indian NGO the South Asian Coalition against Child Servitude.

According to the ILO, some 250 million children between the ages of five and 14 in the world, are working for their living, though not all are victims of exploitation. The majority work to boost the family earnings, in agriculture, domestic work, handicrafts or street peddling.

But many others are virtual slaves. They toil in the mines of Peru and Bolivia, are exploited as prostitutes in the Philippines, Thailand or Brazil, and find themselves in bondage to pay off family debts (this practice is widespread in India and Pakistan).

Ethiopians sent into an Israeli minefield

By Patrick Cockburn

IT THE middle of the Jewish settlement of Ofra on the West Bank there are strange new arrivals. Some of the women wear flowery dresses and carry their babies on their backs. The men have skullcaps, but do not speak Hebrew. They are Falash Mura, Ethiopian Christians who say they were once Jews and plan to reconvert.

They arrived last month in Israel from Addis Ababa and the government immediately bussed 140 to Ofra, a settlement of religious Jews built on land captured by Israel in 1967.

"It is a provocation of the government done to show to the settlers that (Benjamin) Netanyahu wants settlements rather than the peace process," said Addisu Massala, the only Ethiopian member of the Knesset. "People are taken from the airport to the occupied territories. Everyday they ring me up to say they don't want to be there." He says the Ethiopians want to be in

Tel Aviv or Haifa, where many have relatives and it is easier to get jobs.

The Ethiopians seem to sense that they have arrived in a political minefield. Dessalegn Gessese, 58, and fully Jewish, spent 29 years of his life as a tax inspector in Addis Ababa before he arrived in Ofra. At first he says he would prefer to live in Haifa on the coast, but after a conversation in Amharic with other Ethiopians he changes his mind and says he does not mind where he lives: "I don't care if it is Hebron or Gaza so long as I am here. I am a free Jew in my own country."

This is what the settlers of Ofra want to hear. Along with three other settlements in the occupied territories they are taking the Falash Mura in return for a government subsidy. They are also making an ideological point at the very moment Mr. Netanyahu is in Washington, discussing a limited Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. They are not only increasing the number of settlers,



Falash Mura immigrants, who are being sent by the Israeli government to the disputed settlement of Ofra in the West Bank, built on land occupied by Israel in 1967 (photo by Ariel Jerozolimski)

but demonstrating that, for the new immigrant, Ofra is as much part of the land of Israel as Tel Aviv.

The Falash Mura themselves look cheerful. Most came originally from northern Ethiopia. Exactly when and why they converted to Christianity is not clear. Professor Stephen Kaplan, head of the African Studies Department at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, said: "Without being too cynical about it, up to 20 years ago there were clear advantages to being a Christian in Ethiopia; but in the last 20 years there has been a clear

advantage in being Jewish."

About 70,000 Ethiopians have come to Israel since 1984, but the Falash Mura, whose Jewish origin was questioned by previous Israeli governments, remained behind. Most trekked from the north of the country and have lived near the Israeli embassy in Addis Ababa for the past seven years. Nobody knows how many more there are in the Ethiopian countryside.

Ami Bergman, who helped them with food and medical assistance on behalf of the American

Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, thinks there may be another 15,000 Falash Mura.

They are friendly people, with beaming smiles, who wave at anybody they do not know. Oren Tagait, an Ethiopian Jew already living in Israel, who is teaching the children basic Hebrew, says: "Their main problem is getting used to our food." Yaakov Alamo, also an immigrant from Ethiopia in the past and now a maintenance man at Ofra, said: "At first everything is a little hard bit, but they are an accommodating people." He admits that

some of the newly arrived immigrants do not know they are in a settlement.

The settlers are sensitive to the accusation that they are manipulating the newly arrived Ethiopians. As we were asking Mr. Gessese how he felt about being in a settlement in the occupied territories, Michal Finkel, a community coordinator in Ofra, said: "It is journalists asking questions who make the problems. He doesn't care where he is. It wasn't his decision to come here." She says, rightly, that the government made the decision to send the Falash

Mura to Ofra.

Yossi Shtrum, spokesman for the Jewish Agency, which organised the immigration of the Ethiopians, says only one or two per cent of them are being sent to the settlements. He said: "Most want to live in Israel because it is easier to get jobs and they are closer to their relatives."

Their numbers are minuscule compared with the 155,000 Jewish settlers and 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank. But by sending the Falash Mura to Ofra, the Israeli government makes two

points: it wants to increase the number of settlers on the West Bank and it will treat it as part of Israel.

Addisu Massala says the Israeli government is exploiting the Falash Mura to further the ends of its "political ideology." He says they are in a uniquely vulnerable position. Despite their skullcaps they have not yet converted — they would say reconverted — to Judaism. He insists that, despite their smiles, the Ethiopians in Ofra "are very much afraid."

— The Independent

Japan premiers film defending wartime atrocities

By Shino Yuasa
Agence France Presse

TOKYO — A Japanese movie proclaiming war criminal Imperial Army General Hideki Tojo a hero premiered Saturday to cheers and applause here, and revulsion in China. The film praises Tojo, Japan's prime minister from 1941 to 1944, as an innocent patriot and claims his hanging after a Tokyo trial by Allied forces following World War II was a travesty.

Opening at 145 cinemas across Japan, "Pride, an Instant in a Lifetime," also implies the 1937 Nanjing massacre of up to 100,000 Chinese civilians by Japanese forces never happened.

At a screening in Tokyo's high-class shopping district of Ginza, 150 people, mostly men in their 50s and 60s, queued for tickets at the entrance, which was adorned with a large painting of Tojo at the trials. The movie plays heavily on the only judge who disagreed with the death by hanging meted out to seven Japanese leaders including Tojo at the hearings, similar to the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals.

As the film closed with the Indian judge Radhabind Pal's words: "The truth has been replaced by falsehood," the audience roared approval with loud cheering and applause. "It was a wonderful movie," said Izumi Terada, a 53-year-old former government official, as he left the cinema. "I think the movie is objective," he said. About 20 Japanese people protested in front of the cinema. "Stop showing this movie wrongly glorifying the war," one demonstrator shouted through a loudspeaker.

In China, survivors of the Nanjing massacre were shocked. "I am a witness of history," a badly-scarred 80-year-old survivor said as she met in Nanjing with others who lived through the Japanese forces' atrocities. Li said her face was mutilated when she was stabbed 30 times by Japanese soldiers for resisting rape, according to China's official Xinhua news agency. She survived the attack but lost the baby she was carrying at the time.

An historian from Nanjing University, Gao Xingzu, said the film confused right and wrong and tampered with history. "It will surely be spurned by people all around the world," he added.

In the film, Japan's aggression in Asia is a crusade of liberation from Western colonialism and Tojo is sensitive, intelligent, affectionate, kind to his children and grand-children, and devoted to Emperor Hirohito. Asked about the slaughter committed by Japanese troops in the southern city of Nanjing in December 1937, Tojo defiantly asks the 11 judges: "How can you believe the emperor's army could have randomly killed children and women?"

Actor Masahiko Tsugawa, who portrayed the general complete with shaved head, cavalry boots and a uniform covered with medals, told the opening here: "I would like people to see this movie culturally, not politically."

Japan has refused officially to apologise for its wartime crimes and has consistently rejected official accounts of the Nanjing massacre.

Director Shunya Ito defended his work. "Japan is in confusion now because Japanese have not seen anything about the past since the beginning of the Tokyo trial," he told AFP, adding that he wanted young and old people to see the movie. A spokesman for Toei studios, which produced the film, said: "It was unfortunate that some negative image came even before the film is shown. I would like people to actually watch the movie and make their own judgement."

Tojo, named prime minister on October 10, 1941, plunged Japan into war with the United States on December 7, 1941, with the attack on Pearl Harbor. He is a hated reminder of Japan's colonisation of Asian countries before and during World War II. But he is a hero to some Japanese who believe that during the trial, Tojo exonerated Emperor Hirohito of any wartime blame. Tojo's remains are kept in Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo together with war victims and criminals.

"It was Europe and America which were the abominable authors of aggression in Asia," reads a sign on the main altar of the shrine, founded in 1869 to honour those Japanese killed in modern wars. After seeing an early screening of the film, a group of 28 Japanese lawmakers Monday offered it their support.

Is Lebanon drowning in industrial waste?

By Reinoud Leenders

MANY LEBANESE have seriously begun to doubt whether the country can take pride in its natural environment much longer. After 17 years of war the country not only woke up to see its infrastructure largely destroyed. Most of its coastline has turned into a rubbish tip, once stunningly beautiful valleys have been poisoned by the unregulated dumping of waste, and sewage pipelines pour green foam straight out into the Mediterranean.

According to Fuad Hamdan, Greenpeace's representative in Lebanon, the country is "drowning in its own household and industrial waste." Joined by 17 local environmental NGOs, Hamdan has called for an urgent solution to the "daily ecological tragedy." This campaign, he feels, largely falls on deaf ears. The government, notoriously understaffed and paralysed by corruption and incompetence, fails to take substantial measures. International organisations, among them the United Nations and the World Bank, produce glossy reports on "sustainable development", which to date have only created further confusion. On the other hand, the Lebanese Association of Industrialists (LAI) buries itself in a shelter of denial or, at best, utters vague promises to take action.

War of words

While environmentalists, state officials and industrialists are waging a bitter war of words, establishing responsibility and solutions to the pollution drama seem a long way off. Disagreement starts with the scope and severity of the problem. Facts are scarce in the discussion. According to an unpublished study by a London-based consultancy commissioned by the World Bank and the U.N. in 1995, Lebanon produces the incredible amount of 326,000 tonnes of industrial waste each year. But Lebanese industrialists have branded the report "a lie" and "a waste of money."

The consultancy, Environmental Resources Man-

agement, they say, did not bother to conduct a survey to base their calculations on. "They simply arrived at this figure by mathematical equations, using estimates of waste production per worker, while staying in their offices," says LAI spokesman Abu Jawdi. He explains that, normally, the given amount of waste cannot constitute more than one per cent of total production. By this reckoning, total industrial production would exceed by far the real volume of production in Lebanon. "The figure therefore cannot be right. The environmental problem is enormously exaggerated." But LAI refuses to reveal figures on the total volume of production, thereby making verification of its calculations impossible. "We know this figure but it is not very common to give it," says Anwar Berberri, who heads LAI's environmental section. "He is quick to cut off the discussion."

But Greenpeace holds firmly to the figure of 326,000 tonnes of industrial waste per year, merely saying that it "does not understand the equation" put forward by Abu Jawdi. "Greenpeace believes that the World Bank/U.N. study is credible, or at least more credible than any data provided by LAI." But Fuad Hamdan has his own interpretation of the World Bank figure, for which he is uncritically cited in the Lebanese media. Repeatedly mentioning the figure in his press statements to illustrate the gravity of the pollution problem, Hamdan adds that, of these 326,000 tonnes, "an undefined amount is toxic." This does not exactly match the World Bank report, which reads "most of which is non-hazardous" without giving any information on toxicity.

LAI accuses Greenpeace of "always steering towards a showdown" rather than negotiating and offering realistic solutions. "Greenpeace is an organisation that does not compromise," Hamdan said last year. This principled stand has been hailed by the media, but talks between Greenpeace and LAI since November 1996 have got nowhere. "The association loves to

speaking to me about the weather but not about pollution and clean production methods," Hamdan says. "We started slamming the industrialists only after wasting time with their endless blah-blah."

In response to the deadlocked discussion on imprecise and unspecified figures, Greenpeace started to document and sample Lebanon's "industrial disaster zones" last October. Having spent 10 days in a dinghy touring the coastline, Hamdan said that now it could be proven "scientifically for the first time that Lebanese industry is a major polluter." A laboratory at Exeter University in the U.K. is currently analysing the samples taken from heavily polluted rivers like the Litani, from soils from the northern industrial region of Chekka and the three largest cement factories. "Many coastal stretches were brownish and stinky like between Beirut port and Antelias," Hamdan says. "Huge waste dumps poured their leachate into the sea in Tripoli, Beirut and Sidon, while industries such as fertiliser producer the Lebanese Chemical Company in Salaata pumped their waste water directly into the sea."

But even before the test results were released the industrialists claimed the survey is irrelevant. Their main objection is that Greenpeace has "only looked at the end of the sewage pipelines," which are used for both household and industrial waste. Thus, reasons Abu Jawdi, when these samples reveal for example that sewage water has been polluted by chemicals used in paint, it could easily have been thrown into the sewage system by somebody painting his house.

Industry's vague assurances

LAI says it is now busy looking for money to finance its own nation-wide survey. Samples will be taken from factories to show that the Lebanese environmental problem is "a big balloon," Abu Jawdi promises. "We don't want to be pushed into a position of being against the environment." But asked about

who would conduct the survey, all Abu Jawdi says was: "We are talking with many people." When will the survey be held? "Maybe this year. I don't know how, but there will be a survey." Abu Jawdi then said that the test results would not be made public because the private sector was under no obligation to fund any carry out studies the government should take care of. How industry expects to convince people of its innocence with a study the public will not be allowed to look at remains a mystery.

No wonder Greenpeace believes LAI has done almost nothing to prove its concern over the environment. But Abu Jawdi replies that Greenpeace cannot possibly know what LAI is doing "because we won't tell them." He also dismisses measures like forcing factories to annually publish figures on their emissions as unrealistic. Such figures would also document the factories' production volumes, which, given "Lebanon's tax problem," may be studied by Lebanon's tax authorities with great interest.

On an individual basis, few industrialists have taken action to manage their waste output. A paint factory in Kefraya, north east of Beirut, has perhaps been most ambitious in this respect. It is owned by Anwar Berberri, who claims to have developed a technique which "neutralises liquid waste 100 per cent by recycling it indefinitely." The technology he calls "Besol" has won several international prizes, including a prestigious award at the annual U.N. International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva. Two French local authorities approached him to apply his technique in France. But in Lebanon nobody wants to listen and risk-wary commercial banks refuse to fund the project on a larger scale than his own factory. Hamdan depicts Berberri as a dreamer but promised to "ask him to give me the details of his technique and ask our Exeter experts to study it." But three months later Berberri claims not to have heard from Hamdan. "I am managing my own waste but I really don't know whether that is the

case for other pharmaceutical, ink and paint factories. They give their waste to the municipalities and God knows what they do with it. They probably dump it somewhere."

Even World Bank officials opposed to state interference in the economy admit that in matters of environmental protection there is clearly a role for the state to play. But the Lebanese government is still in hopeless disarray — its departments lack qualified personnel, politicians are corrupt and bureaucratic wheels turn slower than those of the country's industries and other major waste producers.

Government-financed studies have so far failed to remove the lack of clarity over the extent of the environmental problem. The quasi governmental Council for Reconstruction and Development (CRD) assured MEI that it conducts an "environmental impact assessment" for all of its projects but all parties involved, most notably the industrialists, say they have never come across such a study. And the CRD did nothing when two Spanish companies and a Lebanese partner, contracted by the CRD to "rehabilitate" household and hospital waste from a site in Beirut, dumped millions of cubic metres of waste above a valley in the Metn. Only after Greenpeace and local activists started a campaign against the government last May were the companies asked to take the waste away, at their own expense. But after months of delay and rain washing away its soil, the area and even the Beirut river may have been contaminated.

The Ministry of the Environment

Proudly referring to the Metn incident as an important precedent, the Ministry of the Environment has called for legal action against major polluters. The ministry was established in 1993, to work to assure "everyone's right to a healthy environment." But it has only 26 permanent staff and an annual budget of around \$3 million. It has already had three ministers, and dedicated staff mem-

bers say privately that it is in a hopeless mess. Under the new minister, Akram Chehayeb, a few improvements have been made. For instance, the ministry successfully urged Lebanon's largest cement factory in Chekka to install cleaner equipment. Chehayeb says he is now working on "a Lebanese environmental code" and "drafting new legislation to penalise polluters."

But as law enforcement is supposed to come from the Ministry of the Interior, led by Michel Murr, new laws are not likely to have much effect. Murr has ignored a ban on quarrying stone from Lebanon's mountain slopes for construction. Moreover, politicians with a large stake in the private sector themselves are not likely to force their own businesses to adopt costly, environment-friendly technologies. A polluting cement factory in Sibliin, near Sidon, has up to now escaped Chehayeb's attention. The once beautiful area surrounding the factory has turned into a barren moonscape which deserves the term "industrial disaster zone." Chehayeb's political patron Walid Jumblatt owns half the factory.

Lebanon's recent past is blamed for the country's ecological problems by government and business alike. The Ministry of the Environment considers "all obstacles" to law enforcement in matters of pollution as "unfortunate residues of the war." Abu Jawdi of LAI says that "all the environmental issues have only risen since the war." On the other hand, Greenpeace has refused to adjust its confrontational strategies to the Lebanese context of slow accommodation and political immobilism. Certainly, hard campaigning has revealed ecological scandals. But given the extremely limited time-span of Lebanese public attention for any political issue, the gains from such an approach have not been very substantial. Without radical reform of the post-war political set-up, this Catch 22 situation may drag Lebanon into an ecological nightmare.

— Middle East International

لبنان من الناحية البيئية

Lebanon seen on course on deficit

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese economists took an unconcerned view of the 51 per cent government deficit registered in April, pleased that the state remains on course to meet its overall 1998 target.

"There is no reason to be concerned. We now have a four-month trend," said one economist who a few months ago had expressed pessimism about the government's fiscal problem. "We are still below the target for the year."

The ministry of finance has said expenditures in April reached 790 billion Lebanese pounds (\$519 million) against revenues of 388 billion pounds. The monthly deficit of 51 per cent was the highest of the year.

However, it left the deficit in the first four months of 1998 at 38 per cent, with spending of 2,282 billion pounds against revenues of 1,412 billion pounds. That is well inside the year's target of 42 per cent.

Economists agreed with the government explanation that April figures were hurt by a burst of eight

public holidays that disrupted revenue collection.

"It is good but too early to tell. What I am really interested in are the May figures," said another analyst, who also requested not to be named. "We are still on target, the policy is still on track."

There will be some tough months ahead, even if the government makes its deficit target for the year. Revenue through the first four months has been about 30 billion pounds per month below the average predicted in the budget for the year, but expenditure has been around 90 billion pounds less.

Since most of the 1998 budget is earmarked for debt servicing (43 per cent) and salaries (35 per cent), there is little room for discretionary spending. One of the economists, while optimistic, said he expected heavy expenditures in the last two months of 1998.

"I am not concerned," Nasser Saidi, first vice governor of the central bank, said of a possible surge in spending later in the year. The central bank,

which had warned the government throughout 1997 about the ballooning debt, was pleased with figures so far this year, he said.

As much as the deficit numbers themselves, the financial sector has been encouraged by the apparent seriousness of the government to tackle a deficit that had grown from minimal levels to near the value of the gross domestic product since Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri took office in 1992.

"I think (Minister Of State For Financial Affairs Fouad) Siniora has been able to convince the prime minister and others in gov-

ernment that they cannot exceed the deficit target," an economist told Reuters.

The confidence has been reflected in a lifting of the pressure on the Lebanese pound that was apparent at the end of 1997.

That has allowed the central bank to move toward lowering interest rates, which in turn has further strengthened the pound as investors rush out of dollars to catch the higher returns in Lebanese treasury bills while the rates are still available.

"The market was encouraged by the 38 per cent (deficit) figure for the four months compared to last

year," said a dealer in foreign exchange. The deficit for all of 1997 was 59 per cent.

The government will also receive some budget benefits from its successful raising of \$1 billion in Eurobonds in March. It is expected to go to the markets for the same amount by early in the second half of the year.

The funds have been used to replace Lebanese pound debt, which bears far higher interest rates — the three-year Eurobond was priced at 246 basis points over U.S. treasuries, while two-year Lebanese treasury bills, the longest avail-

able, carry 16.08 per cent interest. Debt servicing was 46.5 per cent of expenditure in the first four months of the year.

Mr. Hariri has also demonstrated a desire to curb spending by trying to delay payment of civil service pay increases dating back to 1996 until early next year.

Despite protests from some politicians, the wage proposal may not be presented to parliament before it recesses at the end of the month. When it reconvenes it will likely be only to select a president in November, delaying extra wage spending until 1999.

OECD: Russian economy set to grow if reforms continue

PARIS (AFP) — The Russian economy did not shrink in 1997 for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and is set to grow through 1998 and 1999 provided economic reforms continue, the OECD has said.

In its twice-yearly Economic Outlook report, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimated Russian economic growth at 0.4 per cent in 1997, and said gross domestic product (GDP) is likely to grow 2.0 per cent this year and 4.0 per cent in 1999.

But it warned that "the future health of the Russian economy, and a revival of fixed capital investment, will depend greatly on progress in reform of the economy, particularly tax reform and large-scale privatisation."

The fallout from the Asian crisis and its negative effect on financial markets generally is likely to lead to a "very problematic" increase in the cost of government debt in Russia and other developing

economies, the OECD said. Russia is not one of the 29 industrial countries in the OECD, but three other former Soviet bloc countries are — Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

The OECD forecast continued strong growth for Poland, with GDP rising 5.8 per cent this year and 5.6 per cent in 1999 after growing 6.9 per cent last year, while Hungary is expected to see growth of 4.3 per cent this year and 4.6 per cent in 1999, up from 3.8 per cent in 1997.

But the Czech Republic will fare less well, as the economy continues to suffer the after-effects of a currency crisis in May last year that trimmed GDP growth for 1997 to 1.0 per cent.

Czech GDP growth is forecast to rise 0.9 per cent this year and 1.2 per cent in 1999, but the economy's future health depends on faster economic reform, particularly a rapid privatisation of banks, the OECD said.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK OFFICE - AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 23/05/1998											
PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE		
HIGH	LOW			SHARES	SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE			
S 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	16.7	0.98	64	1570	318885	200.50	204.50	4.00+	
2.340	1.620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.9	4.09	3	4450	7588	1.68	1.71	0.03+	
1.300	0.880	MID-EAST INV. BK.	63.7	0.00	14	16000	15513	0.96	0.97	0.01+	
VS 6.510	2.970	THE HOUSING BK.	18.6	3.40	77	34691	100837	2.97	2.94	0.03-	
S 1.180	1.790	JOR. EDU. BANK	9.9	0.00	1	100	188	1.95	1.96	0.01+	
920	590	JOR. CHIF. BANK	4.1	10.14	6	2100	1449	0.68	0.69	0.01+	
S 4.020	1.740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	19.1	0.00	7	825	1534	1.85	1.87	0.02+	
1.000	0.900	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITWA)	4.4	0.00	1	200	180	0.90	0.90	0.00	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 275.32 %CHG: +1.42 174 59981 446281											
S 1.350	0.810	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	45.6	0.00	1	2000	1660	0.82	0.83	0.01+	
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.0	11.63	2	1500	3225	2.15	2.15	0.00	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 121.80 %CHG: +0.04 3 3500 4885											
2.240	1.620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.0	5.37	6	1784	3664	2.07	2.05	0.02-	
1.550	0.970	NATL. PORTFOLIO	42.7	0.00	7	18250	20595	1.07	1.07	0.00	
5.900	3.30	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	0	0.00	25	18200	7585	0.41	0.43	0.02+	
1.480	1.060	MID. EAST HOTELS	0	0.00	2	2200	2376	1.08	1.08	0.00	
+ 4.600	2.080	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.1	1.97	5	2700	5491	2.09	2.03	0.06-	
1.090	0.900	GARSA EDUCATION	16.2	0.00	1	500	920	0.92	0.92	0.00	
1.830	1.450	UNIFIED CO.	6.7	7.24	3	2500	3800	1.50	1.52	0.02+	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.37 %CHG: -0.79 49 47134 43971											
1.160	0.960	ATTANQUES	0	0.00	1	5000	5500	1.10	1.10	0.00	
4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	14.8	4.40	21	17907	44757	2.49	2.50	0.01+	
7.050	3.750	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	26.3	1.74	10	1420	14690	10.35	10.35	0.00	
11.250	9.270	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.99	10	1420	14690	10.35	10.35	0.00	
1.570	1.040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	11.9	6.67	5	1050	1575	1.57	1.50	0.07-	
2.070	1.100	INDUSTRIAL CONH. AGR.	71.5	0.00	15	2881	3418	1.20	1.21	0.01+	
S 5.740	3.680	ARAB PETROL. CHEN.	14.7	7.15	43	11433	61057	5.38	5.33	0.05-	
S 6.800	1.760	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.7	5.68	2	450	792	1.77	1.76	0.01-	
1.440	1.020	JOR. PIPES MANUF.	9.8	8.47	6	3552	4212	1.18	1.18	0.00	
1.330	1.430	GENERAL MINING	98.2	5.00	1	1045	2560	2.53	2.40	0.03-	
3.220	2.220	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	15.9	0.00	3	2000	940	0.46	0.47	0.01+	
S 5.770	400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	15.9	0.00	3	2000	940	0.46	0.47	0.01+	
1.110	0.670	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	23.2	0.00	10	5800	4319	0.73	0.76	0.03+	
510	370	NATIONAL TRDS.	9	0.00	12	8450	52	0.52	0.51	0.01-	
2.020	1.220	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEN.	9	0.00	7	7800	3477	0.43	0.44	0.01+	
S 3.000	0.920	UNIV. CHEN. INDUS.	11.9	6.90	6	1550	1805	1.22	1.16	0.06-	
S 1.730	1.320	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFAC	49.2	0.00	11	2050	2171	1.08	1.05	0.03-	
S 1.560	1.150	JOR. SUEZ-CHEN.	11.2	0.00	13	3850	5812	0.9	0.9	0.00	
S 1.520	0.810	ARAB PHARM. CHEN.	14.7	4.51	4	1750	2318	1.33	1.33	0.00	
S 1.520	0.810	UNIV. MODR. INDUS.	13.7	6.98	6	3650	3114	0.86	0.86	0.00	
1.200	0.660	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	8.9	15.15	5	1900	1254	0.66	0.66	0.00	
1.620	1.320	EXPL. CELORINE	9.6	7.30	3	11750	16098	1.38	1.37	0.01-	
1.080	0.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	12.1	11.63	2	1500	1290	0.86	0.86	0.00	
1.610	1.290	EL -RAY READY WEAR	48.6	0.00	4	1700	2325	1.36	1.38	0.02+	
1.080	0.810	UNIV. CHEN. WINDS.	11.9	6.90	6	1550	1805	1.22	1.21	0.01-	
1.220	0.870	UNIV. CHEN. WINDS.	11.9	6.90	6	1550	1805	1.22	1.21	0.01-	
0.860	0.660	JORDAN STEEL	9.5	8.24	69	308917	261150	0.83	0.85	0.02+	
0.690	0.550	MID-EAST COMPLEX	10.3	0.00	11	17500	9808	0.55	0.57	0.02+	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 102.36 %CHG: -0.51 283 443143 475020											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 180.62 %CHG: +0.73 509 553758 970156											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 23/05/1998											
N 1.050	0.910	EXPORT & FIN. BAK. 75%	17.2	0.00	17	31200	21330	0.94	0.93	0.01-	
N 1.230	1.050	ISLAMIC INSURANCE CO.	0	0.00	4	27000	30930	1.15	1.15	0.00	
N 0.620	0.490	MACH. BQP. BENT. MAIN.	28.0	0.00	2	3000	1530	0.52	0.51	0.01-	
N 0.530	0.340	JOR. TRADE PAC.	0	0.00	5	15000	6723	0.46	0.45	0.01-	
N 0.800	0.660	UNION INV. 50%	0	0.00	7	8000	7060	0.88	0.87	0.01-	
N 0.620	0.360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	0	0.00	16	21600	8640	0.40	0.40	0.00	
N 1.010	0.720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	0	0.00	10	90000	90000	1.00	1.00	0.00	
N 0.780	0.610	AL-SAMALYAH	39.2	0.00	8	18068	11935	0.66	0.67	0.01+	
N 0.290	0.110	JOR. FOOD MATCH-JEMCO	0	0.00	1	500	55	0.11	0.11	0.00	
N 0.600	0.370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	0	0.00	8	31100	13995	0.45	0.45	0.00	
N 0.470	0.240	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	39.2	0.00	9	10900	3716	0.35	0.34	0.01-	
N 0.650	0.380	NATL. WOL. ENG. WATCO	0	0.00	6	10400	4224	0.41	0.41	0.00	
N 0.690	0.580	MID-EAST FERNH. 90%	0	0.00	11	6800	3535	0.62	0.62	0.00	
N 1.660	0.860	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	10.3	7.72	4	3000	4407	1.57	1.62	0.05+	
N 0.430	0.240	UNION TOBACCO	10.3	7.72	4	3000	4407	1.57	1.62	0.05+	
N 0.830	0.470	UNION. CERAMIC	12.8	0.00	5	2500	1230	0.50	0.49	0.01-	
N 0.950	0.550	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	0	0.00	4	1055	680	0.65	0.64	0.01-	
N 0.710	0.430	NATL. POULTRY	0	0.00	12	4450	2393	0.54	0.54	0.00	
N 0.950	0.470	OPTICALS BEARING 75%	0	0.00	3	1000	370	0.63	0.62	0.01-	
N 1.000	0.750	KYBAL PRINT CO. 75%	12.0	9.59	6	4000	2160	0.79	0.79	0.00	
GRAND TOTAL 136 295323 211485											
+ : New 12 months low S : Stock divided during the past 12 months											

* New 12 months Low
* Stock dividend during the past 12 months

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, MAY 24, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Ponder your actions before taking them. Think about what you're going to say before it pops out. People take you seriously, especially right now. Also, be careful how you spend your money. This is a good day for shopping, too. You're more cautious than usual.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You want to buy something that's not on sale. Don't feel guilty. Other people do this all the time. You can, too. Well, maybe not a new Maserati, but something that won't deplete your children's college funds. Think of what it is and go get it.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You've been struggling with a particular issue. It could be a philosophical point, but it's more likely a practical one. Look at it from somebody else's perspective. All of a sudden it will make sense. More important, you'll see the way to proceed to success.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) It's a good day for running errands and socializing with friends and neighbors. There are a couple of things that need to be done before tomorrow, but that's OK. You can get them finished quickly and have more time to relax. Do that.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You're usually very decisive about what you want. However, the conditions in effect right now slow you down a little. You're more apt to think of consequences to your actions you normally wouldn't have considered. You'll seek more options. Don't worry. There are plenty.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Conversations with older people look good today. It could be an argument, but that's OK. You two see things quite differently, but you both kind of like it. It's not probable that either of you will ever win this argument, so don't worry. Just relax and enjoy it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If you didn't start on your trip yesterday, you'll want to do it now. Luckily, you have friends and loved ones to share expenses. If there's something interesting within a hundred miles, go and visit that. Once your curiosity is sated, you'll all settle down a little.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Accord marks beginning of studies to transform Aqaba into a free economic zone

** THE AQABA Region Authority (ARA) has signed a contract with a consortium of three companies specialised in the field of free zone. The agreement, which is financed by the World Bank for an estimated amount of \$1.2 million, stipulates conducting a study to transform Aqaba into an economic zone under special provisions. The zone would include a free seaport and airport.

ARA President Marwan Dudin said that following the required study, which should be completed within five months, the Ministerial Development Council will review it in light of a report to be presented by the technical committee. Mr. Dudin said also that government officials, including military personnel, will be working side by side with the consortium staff.

Muhammad Qudah, a senior official at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, explained that the study in fact covers a number of subjects that aim at formulating a special

strategy to transform Aqaba into an economic zone "under special provisions." He indicated that the study also aims at laying down the implementation plan and the mechanism to set up a free zone.

Other objectives include an evaluation of the Aqaba port in terms of location and the commercial activity compared to other ports. Furthermore, the study will evaluate the infrastructure, services and the mechanism for modernising the general design in addition to evaluating the legal and institutional infrastructure for all government departments in Aqaba.

Mr. Qudah concluded that the study, which will be conducted with the participation of 15 government parties representing all sectors, will specify the role and future of state departments in Aqaba and the mechanism for restructuring them within the implementation plan. (Al Ra'i).

Contractors to get exemption from income tax for 1985-1995 period

** THE INCOME Tax Department is currently preparing an estimation of profits made by housing contractors over the ten-year (1985-1995) period. The estimation will be included in a comprehensive report that the department will submit to the Council of Ministers to exempt the contracting companies from paying income tax on the profits.

The Council of Ministers has decided to impose income tax on the companies

engaged in building housing units starting Jan. 1, 1996. As such, the Income Tax Department will be taxing the profits of the companies for the year 1996-1997.

According to a settlement reached between the government and the companies, the firms will be exempted from paying the tax for the 1985-1995 period but they are required to pay the income tax starting Jan. 1, 1996 (Al Dustour).

Arab fertiliser producers open meeting in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Federation of Chemical Fertilisers (AFCF) opened a five-day meeting in Amman Saturday to prepare intensive studies on marketing fertilisers and discuss cooperation among Arab producers and also to prepare for an international conference on fertilisers due to open in the Qatari capital of Doha in October.

Other topics on the agenda include the preparation of a guidebook about fertiliser industries and protecting the environment in the Arab World, according to a statement by the federation which organised the meeting in conjunction with the Jordan Phosphate Mines company (JPMC), the Arab Potash Company and the Jordanian-Japanese Fertilisers Company.

Addressing the opening session was JPMC's Director General Sameh Madani who spoke about the major challenges facing the Arab fertilisers industry

and stressed the need for upgrading the federation's regulations in order to cater to the new developments and new trends in the fertilisers industry.

AFCF Secretary General Ali Hamdi said the projected guidebook will provide a tool for Arab fertiliser industries to exchange information and increase their cooperation and will also help the concerned fertiliser businesses to introduce measures to protect the environment.

He added that the AFCF secretariat has prepared a working paper giving detailed information about the fertiliser industry, means of control and operations and ways of combating pollution.

According to Mr. Hamdi, the Arab World's fertiliser producer countries are among the world's major producers and, as such, coordination among Arab states is of vital importance for the continued progress in this industry.



Fastlink CEO, David Bosworth (left) and Housing Bank chairman, Zuhair Khouri, initial a \$26 million syndicated loan Saturday for Fastlink's coming expansion (photo courtesy of Housing Bank)

Ten banks extend \$24.6m syndicated loan to Fastlink

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under an agreement signed Saturday, ten banks led by the Housing Bank extended a \$26.4 million syndicated loan to Jordan Mobile Telephone Services (JMTS).

Housing Bank Chairman Zuhair Khouri signed the agreement on behalf of the banks and JMTS chief executive officer, David Bosworth, signed on behalf of JMTS, known as Fastlink.

The bank declined to comment on the syndicated loan's grace period and interest rates.

The syndicated loan will provide JMTS with credit facilities for the purchase of infrastructural equipment needed in the fourth optional phase to extend Fastlink's GSM network, Mr. Bosworth said.

At its inception, in

1994, Fastlink received a \$36 million loan from the International Financial Corporation (IFC), an affiliate of the World Bank.

Fastlink, which has 56,000 subscribers and covers most parts of the Kingdom so far, aims at covering the Ma'an - Azraq route and the Rweished area up to the Iraqi border, Mr. Bosworth said.

A new competitor, the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC), is expected to launch its own mobile service after Fastlink's licence of exclusivity ends in October.

Fastlink is suing the government for announcing the second service provider, JTC, before the end of the exclusivity licence for which the company paid JD24 million at the end of 1994.

"I am very optimistic that we will reach a settlement with the govern-

ment shortly," Mr. Bosworth told the Jordan Times.

Fastlink recently stepped up its sales and marketing efforts as the sole mobile phone provider in Jordan by going into partnership with cell-phone vendors. The new arrangement involves halving cell-phones' retail prices and waiving Fastlink's JD70 connection charge.

The nine other banks participating in the syndicate in addition to the Housing Bank are: British Bank, Philadelphia Investment Bank, Export and Finance Bank, Arab Jordan Investment Bank, ANZ Grindlays, Arab Banking Corporation, Citibank, Union Bank, Jordan Investment and Finance Bank and Jordan Kuwait Bank.

Combining Chrysler and Mercedes production could be risky — analysts

DETROIT (AFP) — Chrysler and Daimler-Benz could face problems blending their manufacturing procedures, notably a threat to brand image if vehicles from both companies came out of the same plant, analysts warned.

"Absolutely — it would be a risk," said auto expert David Cole, head of University of Michigan's transportation study office.

"That's the kind of thing they will decide as their plans evolve," he added.

Following the recent merger announcement, Chrysler Chairman Robert Eaton said plans for a Mercedes minivan — manufactured by Daimler-Benz — would be scrapped and suggested some Mercedes production could be carried out in a Chrysler plant.

But analysts do not see that happening for four to five years. Combining some manufacturing could be a tempting solution to a problem both companies share — too little manufacturing capacity in the midst of a worldwide glut in vehicle assembly potential.

Part of Chrysler's appeal in the DaimlerChrysler merger is an extremely efficient and profitable manufacturing capability that is the envy of other North American vehicle makers.

"I don't know of any Chrysler plant that has any open capacity anywhere," said James Harbour, whose company, Harbour Associates, tracks North American auto industry production capabilities.

"Last month they were running at 140 per cent" including overtime and extra shifts, he said.

Even now, Chrysler does not build all its own vehicles. The Chrysler Sebring Coupe and Dodge Avenger midsize autos are manufactured for Chrysler by Mitsubishi

Motors, in Normal, Illinois. Originally, part of the Diamond Star joint venture of the two companies, it now is owned by Mitsubishi.

And Daimler-Benz also has manufacturing constraints in the United States that reflect the popularity of its new M Class sport utility vehicles, built in Vance, Alabama.

The plant's original capacity of 65,000 vehicles a year is being expanded to 80,000. But that still might not be enough.

The merger makes sense because it would combine two distinctively different product lines, with only a small overlap in the sport utility area.

Chrysler's mass produced, volume vehicles are firmly middle-of-the-road for American consumers. Its most famous exports are the Jeeps that trade on near-icon status worldwide.

Daimler-Benz makes far fewer of its elitist Mercedes models. "I don't believe they would be prepared right at this moment to put a Mercedes in a Chrysler plant," said Mr. Harbour.

It is doubtful a Mercedes model could use the capacity of a full-size Chrysler plant on its own.

Sharing assembly facilities is one possibility, with both products using the same paint system — the biggest problem challenge in any auto plant.

But a Mercedes would require a new body shop, trim and chassis lines while building rear-drive Mercedes models alongside Chrysler's front-wheel-drive-only models would also pose challenges.

Mr. Harbour said it was likely the merged company would develop a luxury minivan off the Chrysler minivan platform — but designated a Mercedes to be sold only in Mercedes dealerships.

Ceremony to mark start of construction of 'Le Royale Hotel Complex and Tower'

By Mohammad Ben Hasssein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Signalling the start of construction work on a five-star \$130 million hotel, a cornerstone is expected to be laid Tuesday in a ceremony held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein.

"Le Royal Hotel Complex and Tower, in the heart of Amman, would be ready to receive guests by Christmas 1999, officials close to the project said Saturday.

It will include a huge shopping mall with banking facilities, three cinemas equipped with the latest state-of-the-art sound equipment and screens.

The hotel will join ten luxury hotels springing up across Amman and elsewhere across the country, heralding tough competition in a limited market that has long shown sensitivity to political uncertainty

sweeping the region since Israel's hard-line Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took over in June 1996.

But hotel officials are banking on an expected influx of hundreds of thousands of Christian pilgrims to the region to celebrate the end of the second millennium to fill their rooms.

"Jordan's drive to lure tourists to visit the Kingdom and upcoming celebrations to mark the start of the third millennium, will help revive the tourism industry," the official told the Jordan Times.

"Le Royal will contain 300 rooms, including two royal suites and 34 other suites," the official added. It will also feature two special restaurants and a bar.

Jordanian investors, including influential and young Jordanian businessmen, have pooled efforts with the London-based Iraqi tycoon Nazmi

Ouchi, to set up the complex that will include Jordan's biggest banquet and conference halls with a capacity to seat 3,000 people. It will have three indoors and outdoor swimming pools and parking facilities for 620 cars.

The complex will be constructed over 4,000 square metres of land near the Ministry of Information on the Third Circle.

Mr. Ouchi's brother, Namin, was slain in Amman in January together with four other Iraqis and three Egyptians. Officials have not seized the unidentified assailants in the grizzly crime that shocked the country.

Political tension in the Middle East, including Iraq's stand-off with the United Nations, soured a favourable outlook for Jordan's tourism industry in 1997.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7891	0.8133	1.4632	135.80	1.4600	1734.80	1.9619	5.8980
DE Mark	0.5685	-	0.3484	0.5318	77.19	0.8241	985.79	1.1266	3.3623
GB Sterling	1.2305	2.8896	-	2.3867	221.44	2.3642	2826.27	3.2315	9.5167
CH Franc	0.6834	120.14	0.4187	-	92.77	0.9903	1184.57	135.36	4.0281
JP Yen	0.0074	1.2807	0.4513	1.0771	-	1.0674	12.77	145.89	4.3416
CA Dollar	0.6897	1.2916	0.4225	1.0566	1.07	-	1270.30	1.4561	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0136	0.3533	0.0843	1279.10	0.8355	-	11.42	3.3884
NL Guilder	0.5045	88.74	0.3093	73.83	68.47	0.7314	875.80	-	2.9782
FR Franc	0.1695	0.2992	0.1039	24.8063	23.00	0.2458	33.80	33.6000	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6388	0.3057	3.6728	1613.00	3.4160
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2897	0.5317	5.1337	0.4312	5.1803	2133.99	4.8166
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0815	0.96	403.42	0.9106
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9485	-	9.66	8.8109	9.74	4013.49	9.0588
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0840	1.01	416.68	0.9382
Kuwait Dinar	3.2712	2.3193	12.2682	1.2332	11.91	-	12.01	4849.30	0.9382
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	1.0226	0.9910	0.0832	-	411.95	0.9298
Lebanese 1000	0.68	0.4686	2.4788	0.2492	2.4057	0.2020	2.4275	-	2.2571
Egyptian	0.2828	0.2076	1.0882	0.1104	1.0688	0.0895	1.0755	443.05	-

Energy									
Oil	Last	Review							
Brent	14.37	14.33							
W. Texas	14.76	14.11							
Bonny	14.37	14.33							
Dubai	12.29	11.94							
UL Gas	145.00	145.00							

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	298.8	300.4							
Silver (oz's)	5.28	5.32							
Platinum (oz's)	378.7	380.7							
AL (3 Months)	1403	1405							
CU (3 Months)	1683	1686							
Zinc (3 Months)	1072	1075							
Lead (3 Months)	570	573							
NI (3 Months)	4890	4910							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	9114.44	-17.93	-0.2	9164.28	9077.32	9132.37		
New York	S&P 500	1110.47	-4.17	-0.37	1116.89	1107.99	1114.64		
London	FT-SE 100	5856.6	20	0.34	5857.7	5808.8	5936.5		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15801.85	-43.6	-0.28	15915.2	15736.2	15845.3		
Paris	CAC 40	4048.78	1.86	0.05	4079.97	4021.39	4047.92		
Frankfurt	DAX	5564.21	53.23	0.97	5564.56	5506.21	5510.88		

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Anelka, Lamouchi to miss World Cup

CLAIREFONTAINE, France (AFP) — Arsenal striker Nicolas Anelka and Monaco's former Auxerre midfielder Sabri Lamouchi were among six players axed from the French World Cup squad on Saturday by trainer Aimé Jacquet.

Anelka, Lamouchi, Ibrahim Ba, Martin Djetou, Pierre Laigle and goalkeeper Lionel Letizi were omitted as Jacquet trimmed his squad from 28 to the 22 who will be confirmed on the June 2 deadline.

While there was disappointment for 19-year-old Anelka, his two

teammates on the Arsenal team that completed the English League-Cup double — Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit — were both included in the squad.

Jacquet preferred young Monaco striker Thierry Henry to Anelka, but selected Vieira and Petit ahead of AC Milan's Ba and Lamouchi.

Jacquet dropped one goalkeeper, one defender (Djetou) and three midfielders (Ba, Laigle and Lamouchi), along with Anelka.

His squad now comprises three goalkeepers, six defenders, nine

midfielders and four attackers.

Twelve of the players who competed in the 1996 European championships in England have been retained.

The French squad is:

Goalkeepers: Fabien Barthez (Monaco), Lionel Charbonnier (Auxerre), Bernard Lama (West Ham)

Defenders: Laurent Blanc (Marseille), Vincent Candela (AS Roma), Marcel Desailly (AC Milan), Frank Leboeuf (Chelsea), Bixente Lizarazu (Bayern Munich),

Lilian Thuram (Parma)

Midfielders: Alain Boghossian (Sampdoria), Didier Deschamps (Juventus), Bernard Diomedé (Auxerre), Youri Djorkaeff (Inter Milan), Christian Karembeu (Real Madrid), Emmanuel Petit (Arsenal), Robert Pires (Metz), Patrick Vieira (Arsenal), Zinedine Zidane (Juventus)

Forwards: Christophe Dugarry (Marseille), Stéphane Guivarc'h (Auxerre), Thierry Henry (Monaco), David Trezeguet (Monaco).

Klinsmann out to prove he is 'Captain Marvel'

PARIS (AFP) — On form or not, Jurgen Klinsmann's place in Germany's squad is assured.

It is not just his ability to score but his international experience and leadership qualities that is so important to coach Berti Vogts.

A lot of the shine has gone from the blond striker since he led the Germans to a Golden Goal victory over the Czech Republic at Euro 96 but Vogts still holds him in high esteem.

Repeated bust-ups with club coaches have made a footballer a nomad of him.

Over the last two seasons he has switched from Bayern Munich to Sampdoria Genoa to a short reunion with Tottenham Hotspur in England searching vainly for a coach and teammates who appreciate him.

Klinsmann admits to having a difficult personality but is also committed to his trade.

The 33 year old held the coveted World Cup aloft in Rome in 1990. But he has also experienced failure, when Germany suffered a bitter quarter final loss to Bulgaria at the last World Cup in the United States.

This will be Klinsmann's last campaign for his country, opening the way for younger blood. He will continue to play club football after France, although where is not certain.

Several bad injuries have prevented Klinsmann from finding his true form this season, including torn ankle ligaments which needed operating before Christmas and a broken jaw.

No one can dispute his commitment or desire to do well but a striker's success must be measured by the number of times he scores and in this department Klinsmann is way behind his colleagues Ulf Kirsten and Oliver Bierhoff.

If he does not deliver early in France Vogts has said he will leave him on the bench. Then his secondary powers would be called upon: promoting team spirit and motivating his teammates.



Berti Vogts (R), coach of the German national soccer team, talks with Lothar Matthäus during a practice session at the training camp of the German team in Helsinki May 23. The German national soccer team are staying in Helsinki for a 10-day training camp to prepare for the soccer World Cup in France (Reuters photo).



Roberto Baggio, Sandro Cois, Luigi Di Biagio, Fabio Cannavaro run with (Back L-R) Christian Vieri and Giuseppe Bergomi during Italy's first day of training May 23 to prepare for the World Cup finals in France. Italy will play in a group with Austria, Chile and Cameroon (Reuters photo).



Dutch soccer star Patrick Kluivert kisses a replica of the World Cup brought by a Spanish journalist after a training session of the Dutch National team at the Centre Sportif in Nyon May 23. The Netherlands will play Belgium, Mexico and South Korea in Group E of the 1998 World soccer Championships in France starting June 10 (Reuters photo).

Stand and deliver order from no-nonsense Berti

PARIS (AFP) — He is known throughout Germany simply as "Berti", a no-nonsense man of moderate tones whose face flushes red with anger when his charges do not deliver what he expects of them.

Vogts stepped into very large shoes when he became Germany's coach, taking over in 1990 after being Franz Beckenbauer's deputy.

Beckenbauer parted in a blaze of glory, leading Germany to the 1990 World Cup title in Rome.

There was no higher ground left for Vogts to go but it was obvious he would have a hard road to travel.

Using the same players from Beckenbauer's era, led by Lothar Matthäus, Rudi Voller and Andreas Brehme, Vogts took Germany to the final of the European championships in 1992 only to be beaten by underdogs Denmark in the final.

Two years later, in the loud, popcorn-smelling stadium of America, Germany fell in the quarter finals of

the World Cup against Bulgaria.

Vogts despaired and was on the verge of resigning. He was talked out of it, rebuilt the side and took it all the way to the 1996 European championships.

Playing the Czech Republic at Wembley, Germany won the world's first international title through an Oliver Bierhoff extra time Golden Goal. The result sealed Vogt's place in the history books, but now he wants to make up for the World Cup debacle of 1994.

During his playing days with Borussia Mönchengladbach he was known as "the terrier", a small but tough defender in the classic never-say-die German mould.

Today he is a strict disciplinarian who demands equal dedication and passion from the players under his command. Those who do not perform or fall below his standards of appropriate behaviour, either on or off the football field, are summarily dismissed.

Bodo Illgner and Stefan

Effenberg are cases in point — both were dismissed after USA-94 and have not been nominated for Germany since.

Equally though, promising, young players have every chance of representing their country.

Except for Jurgen Klinsmann, Vogts chooses his sides purely on form and not because of their star status or past achievements.

World Cup countdown with Franz Beckenbauer

Are you a World Cup expert? Then let me challenge you

8) There have been several players who have succeeded in scoring an epic four goals in a single World Cup match.

It is sufficient to mention, for example, Brazil's Ademir and Uruguay's Juan Schiaffino, who both scored a "quartet" of goals in Brazil 1950, or the Frenchman Just Fontaine who emulated them in 1958 in Sweden.

Eusebio of Portugal did exactly the same in England in the 1966 World Cup and Spaniard Emilio Butragueno in Mexico in 1986. But only one player has scored five goals in one match.

It happened in the United States in 1994. What was his name?

Solve the country contest daily to find the phrase at the end of Beckenbauer's World Cup countdown

8) Many of this country's famous men were very musical and its most famous woman showed 250 years ago that it was possible to combine a career and have children by giving birth to 16 of them. She completely reorganised the state apparatus and was not afraid to engage in confrontation with neighbouring countries from time to time.

One of her more peace-loving compatriots made new discoveries about the human psyche, which many of his contemporaries found immoral. Another countryman had a very strict father, which, coupled with an unusual talent produced a youngster who had astonishing ability in his tender years and achieved world fame later.

It is said of the normal citizens that they are unable to pass a shop window filled with cakes. Most places are only reachable after much climbing, which is an advantage for those suffering from weight problems.

The capital however, is flat. The monarchy here was abolished after a lost war.

Solution:

What's wrong here?



Ronaldo, shown here fighting for the ball with England's Paul Gascoigne in the 1997 four-team friendly competition in France, could emerge as the great star of this World Cup, and follow the illustrious World Cup path which others such as Pele, Cruyff and Maradona have trodden before him. 'Footballer of the year' in 1997 and integral part of Inter Milan, the player has everything in his favour in this, his second, World Cup. He participated for the first time in the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

The phrase we are looking for offers a rather precise, though harsh definition of an ability considered indispensable in the world of diplomats.

Please fill in the respective letters in the corresponding positions:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39
40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50
51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64
65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74

Please enter the letters of the country as instructed in the solution squares as follows:

First letter of the country in position 18.
Fourth letter in position 45.

Facts and figures about the participating countries

COLOMBIA
1,141,748 sq km · Capital: Bogota
Population: 37,422,791 — 32.8 per sq km (1993)
Principal language: Spanish
Annual GNP per capita: US\$ 1,620. — (1994)
Participation in World Cup championships:
1930 · 34 · 38 · 42 · 50 · 54 · 58 · 62 · 66 · 70 · 74 · 78 · 82 · 86 · 90 · 94 · 98

ANSWERS

CHALLENGE QUIZ

7) Argentina, in the final of the World Cup 1990 in Italy. They lost 1-0 to Germany.

COUNTRY CONTEST

1) Norway 2) South Africa 3) Cameroon 4) Scotland 5) Chile 6) England 7) Brazil

PHOTO CONTEST

1) The error is in the photo. The top part of the FIFA cup is not a football. In the original it is a globe of the earth.

2) The mistake is in the photo. Maradona wore the number 10 and not the number 20 and Buchwald always the number 6 and not the number 9.

3) The caption is erroneous. Pele did not announce his retirement from the national team on this occasion. He did that one year later, in 1971, playing his last match against Yugoslavia in Rio de Janeiro's Maracana Stadium.

4) The photo is wrong. The lion, which is Cameroon's emblem, is missing from the team's shirts. Also there is no five-pointed star on Romania's jerseys.

5) The error is in the caption. The Stade de

France in St. Denis, Paris, was not inaugurated until months later, in 1998, with a friendly between France and Spain, which France won 1-0.

6) This scene is from the final of the 1966 World Cup in London's Wembley Stadium between England and Germany. After 90 minutes the score stood at two goals apiece. In extra time, in the 101st minute, the ever-controversial situation arose. Geoff Hurst took a shot. Germany's goalie Tilkowski managed to get a touch to the ball, which was deflected on to the underside of the crossbar and fell vertically to the ground (top photo). After the bounce, the ball was headed away by Weber (middle photo) but at the bottom of the photo Hunt can be seen celebrating what he thought was a goal. It will probably never be known for certain whether the ball actually crossed or only bounced on the white line. But Swiss referee Gottfried Dienst, after many minutes of doubt and discussion with his linesman Torfik Bakhtamov from the Soviet Union, awarded England the Goal. England went on to win 4-2 and become World Champions.

7) The photo is wrong. The lion, which is Cameroon's emblem, is missing from the team's shirts. Also there is no five-pointed star on Romania's jerseys.

8) The error is in the caption. The Stade de

Jazz lea

LOS ANGELES (AFP) —

Malone and the Los Angeles Lakers, moving the

association from the Los Angeles Lakers to the Los Angeles Lakers.

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Jazz lead Lakers 3-0

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Karl Malone and the Utah bench overpowered the Los Angeles Lakers, moving the Jazz within one victory of their second trip in a row to the National Basketball Association Finals.

Malone scored 26 points while reserves Shandon Anderson, Bryon Russell and Chris Morris played key roles in Friday's 109-98 triumph, which gave Utah a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference final.

"It was a huge win for us," said Malone, who scored only four points in the first half but 22 in the second. "Our offense came alive for us. Our bench really stepped up and responded for us."

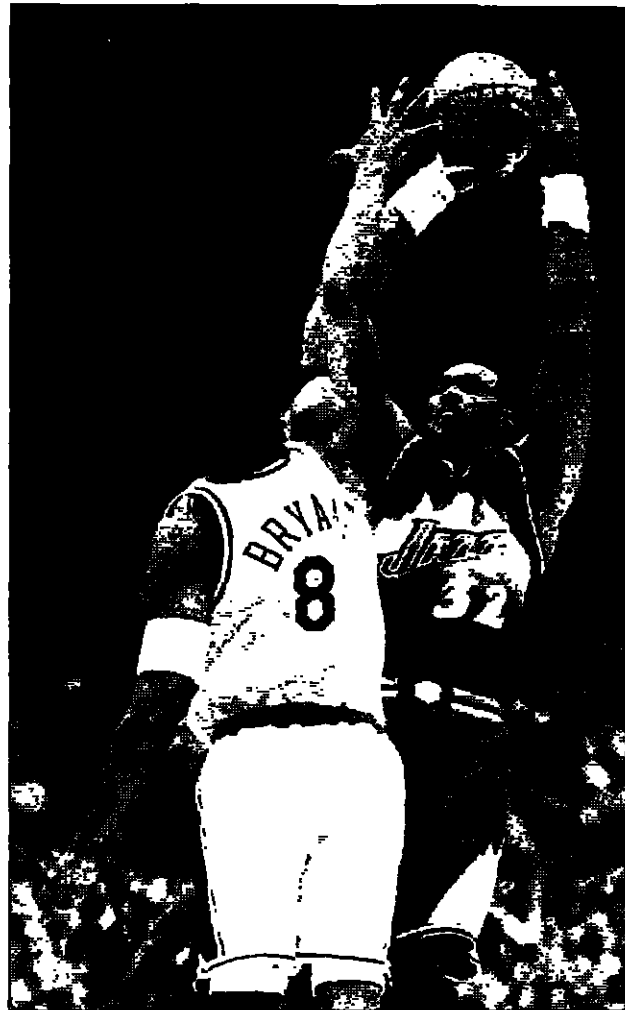
No team has ever recovered from a 3-0 deficit to win an NBA playoff series and the Lakers have shown no signs they can even come close to beating the Jazz, winners in nine of their past 10 games.

"We should be (embarrassed)," Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal said. "It's very frustrating. We played with no emotion. They wanted it more than we did. Now we're in a terrible hole, and we can't give up."

O'Neal had 39 points and 15 rebounds but had little help from outside. Eddie Jones had 16 points and fellow guard Nick Van Exel scored 10. They together missed 24 of 32 shots, including 10 of 13 three-pointers.

"Shaq got his points but down the stretch they weren't able to hit," Malone said. "You have to work on Shaq. You have to put your body on him the whole time. I did weight training last summer and it paid off. We were able to make him work."

Anderson came off Utah's bench to score 11 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter. Morris added 15 points and seven rebounds and Russell made a key three-point bas-



Utah Jazz's Karl Malone (R) shoots over Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant in the first period of game three of the Western Conference Finals of the NBA play-offs in Inglewood (Reuters photo)

ket 93 seconds from the finish.

"Their efficiency did us in. Their bench knocked us out," Lakers coach Del Harris said. "It was very quiet in the dressing room. Obviously, we all thought we would win the game."

Utah's bench outscored that of the home team 46-22.

"We have played better because our bench has played better, and that's a critical factor to us," Utah Coach Jerry Sloan said.

The Jazz shared the NBA's best regular-season record with Chicago, the club which beat Utah in six games in last year's final.

Three of those losses came by four points or less.

This year the Jazz would own the home-court edge over the Bulls by virtue of matching their NBA-best record and winning the season series from Chicago 2-0.

For Malone and John Stockton, Olympic heroes and NBA stars, the chance at a first-ever NBA crown is within reach — provided they don't make the greatest collapse in NBA history and drop four in a row to the Lakers.

"I can't imagine that," Utah center Greg Foster said.

French Open preview

Majoli hopes to get back on course

PARIS (AFP) — Sometimes winning a Grand Slam marks the launch of a glittering career.

The most obvious example is Boris Becker, who took Wimbledon by storm as a teenager and never looked back.

Last year, Patrick Rafter stole the U.S. Open, and Gustavo Kuerten came out of nowhere and claimed the French Open crown to the sound of samba drums echoing around Roland Garros. But although Rafter and Kuerten have boosted their careers by their Grand Slam success, sometimes it works the other way.

When Mats Wilander won the U.S. Open and, at the same time, took over the No. 1 ranking from Ivan Lendl, it virtually marked the end of his career. With nowhere to go but down — that's where the Swede went. Having achieved a lifetime goal, he no longer felt the motivation to continue and a tumble down the rankings was soon followed by an early retirement.

Last year, Iva Majoli surprised everyone by winning the women's singles at the French Open. But rather than lifting her to greater heights and achievement, she has struggled ever since.

After being No. 4 in the world, she has since slipped out of the top 10 for the first time since 1995, and although she won three titles in 1997, she hasn't triumphed at a tournament since her historic title win over super favourite Martina Hingis at Roland Garros.

Although she denies there is a connection, Majoli admits she felt it hard to motivate herself for tournaments after the greatest moment of her career — a moment she didn't have time to savour for several weeks.

"That was the best day of my life," she recalls.

"I was so in shock, you know. After I won I sat on the chair and I just didn't think

anything. I was sitting there and thinking, 'okay'. It was the weirdest feeling. I thought I was going to feel unbelievable, but when it was finished I felt like I'd won a junior tournament and everything was empty in me."

"I guess it was always my dream to win my favourite tournament, and now it was done. It was after a month I really started to realise, when people came to me and said congratulations. But I never really had time to think about it because I had to play another tournament."

She went to Eastbourne, where she slammed the organisers for not putting her on centre court, claiming that even if her dog had won the French Open he would have been awarded that privilege and then she moved on to Wimbledon, winning there for the first time in her career. After reaching the quarter-finals at the All England Club it was time to take a break, and at last she celebrated her French victory.

But after that the bubble burst.

Although she hasn't exactly disgraced herself, reaching semi-finals in Tokyo and Linz this year, she is struggling these days.

Still, Iva has her priorities in life in the right order. "Somebody has to win and somebody has to lose, and when you see how other people struggle in life you should be so happy that you can make a living in sports," she said.

"You should just walk down the street and say 'I'm the happiest person in the world'. No matter whether you win or lose the match, I have a great life and I would never change it for anything else."

Majoli's level-headedness extends to her desire to help others from her position of privilege.

"With all the things that happened in Croatia there are so many kids left without a family," she said.

"I have helped one sick girl and she's improving. I never have time see her that much anymore, but when I get a letter or a postcard from her it's the best feeling for me."

"No money can buy that, when you can help somebody and they appreciate it so much. You maybe don't give a huge amount of money, but you feel like you did because it helps the person so much. It just feels great to help others. Maybe you would be the one to need help one day."

Majoli has won over three million dollars in her career, so she doesn't need to play the lottery. But what would she do with the money if she did, and she won?

"Probably buy my family some presents," she considered.

"I don't really need anything right now, so I'd probably give to some charity. One thing I don't like is when people work their whole life and when they're 60 they're so rich, but all they've done is work 24 hours a day and what did they enjoy?"

"I'd rather just travel and do all the things that I love, and spend money. What are you going to do if you're just putting it in the bank and just counting it. I like to have fun."

There's so much pressure all year long playing tournaments, so every time I get the chance to go somewhere I go, and even if I have to fly all day I'm going to fly and stay in a country for 10 days and enjoy it."

"I like to see different countries and cultures. It's very interesting. Like the Chinese are totally different to how we are, and the French and South Americans. It's totally different lifestyles."

The results might not be flowing on court and Iva might no longer be heading for number one, but it is obvious that, for her, life itself is number one. And you can't argue with that.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

EF Language holds narrow lead

LA ROCHELLE (AFP) — EF Language, which has already sealed overall victory, led the fleet early Saturday on the final leg of the Whitbread Round-the-World race. The Swedish entry, skippered by Paul Cayard, led by 0.6 nautical miles from British entry Silk Cut and was 230.2 nautical miles from the finish in Southampton, England, at the Saturday morning report. Only 7.2 miles separated the leader from backmarker Swedish Match as the first three yachts started to sail into lighter breeze. The fleet are expected to land in Southampton some time after midday on Sunday. The ninth and final leg, a short hop from La Rochelle to Southampton, will decide second and third places in the overall standings.

Keegan to continue at Fulham

LONDON (AFP) — Former Newcastle boss Kevin Keegan confirmed Friday that he intends carrying on as Ray Wilkins' successor at Fulham. Keegan took charge of the first team when Wilkins was sacked as manager just before Fulham's second Division play-off semi-final against Grimsby. Fulham missed out on promotion, going down 2-1 on aggregate over the two legs.

Colchester win promotion

LONDON (AFP) — David Gregory slotted home a dramatic penalty to earn Colchester promotion to England's division three for the first time in 22 years in the play-off final at Wembley Friday. The 28-year-old Gregory, who was also his side's hero when he scored twice against Barnet in the semi-finals, showed no nerves when he stepped up to send his spot kick in off the left upright after 22 minutes. The penalty came when defender Steve Forbes handled inside the box and the goal took the stuffing out of Torquay. Ironically Torquay had the better of the early play and their leading scorer Rodney Jack, a St Vincent international, was a constant threat in the early raids.

Halard continues comeback

STRASBOURG (AFP) — Former French No. 1 Julie Halard-Decugis boosted her Roland Garros hopes here Friday when she continued her comeback to top flight tennis by reaching the final of the \$200,000 WTA tournament. The 27-year-old Halard-Decugis, out of tennis last season with ankle and stomach injuries, scored an impressive 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) victory over 36th-ranked Russia's Elena Likhovtseva. She now faces second seeded Romanian Irina Spirlea for the title. Spirlea eliminated another French player — Alexandra Fusai 7-5, 6-3. Halard-Decugis, a wild-card entry, was drawn Friday to play Naoko Kijimuta of Japan in the first round of the French Open while Spirlea, who will be ninth-seed at Roland Garros opens against Sylvia Plischke of Austria.

Spadea books Rios faceoff

VIENNA (AFP) — American Vince Spadea stands in the way of Chilean top seed Marcelo Rios after both men booked a final showdown Friday at the \$425,000 ATP Tour event at St Polten. Marcelo Rios, one of the favourites for the French Open starting next week, saw off fourth seed Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy 6-4, 6-3, while Spadea brushed aside Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay 6-3, 6-0. Filippini had been expected to see off Spadea after his impressive straight sets victory Thursday over home favourite Thomas Muster, but the Uruguayan's form deserted him and he crashed out of the event which he won last year.

Testud crashes to Swiss teenager

MADRID (AFP) — Patty Schnyder, Switzerland's "other" teenage tennis prodigy, swept into the final of the \$164,250 WTA tournament here Friday when she eliminated top-seeded Sandrine Testud of France in straight-sets. Schnyder, the 19-year-old Fed Cup teammate of World No. 1 Martina Hingis who has risen to 19th in the world rankings, notched up a 6-4, 7-5 win. She now faces second-seeded Dominique Van Roost of Belgium for the title. Van Roost outplayed Barbara Schett of Austria 6-2, 6-2. Testud was slow to settle against Schnyder but she looked as though she might claw her way back into the match when she led 5-3 in the second set. The Swiss player, however, finished with a flourish by winning four games in a row. Schnyder's victory came as a serious pre-French Open warning to South Africa's Amanda Coetzer. Coetzer, who will be fifth seed at Roland Garros faces the Swiss player in the first round.

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Hakkinen takes pole position in Monte Carlo

MONTE CARLO (AFP) — World championship leader Mika Hakkinen continued his domination of the Formula One season when he grabbed pole position for Sunday's Monaco Grand Prix.

Hakkinen clocked 1min 19.798sec in his McLaren-Mercedes during Saturday's final qualifying session to edge out his Scottish teammate David Coulthard by 0.339sec.

It was the fifth pole position of the Flying Finn's career — and his fourth during a season in which he currently leads Coulthard by seven points.

Hakkinen, who lives in Monaco, has never finished better than sixth in his home Grand Prix.

"It really was very exciting and I am just delighted to get on pole, though it was not easy to get ahead of David," he said.

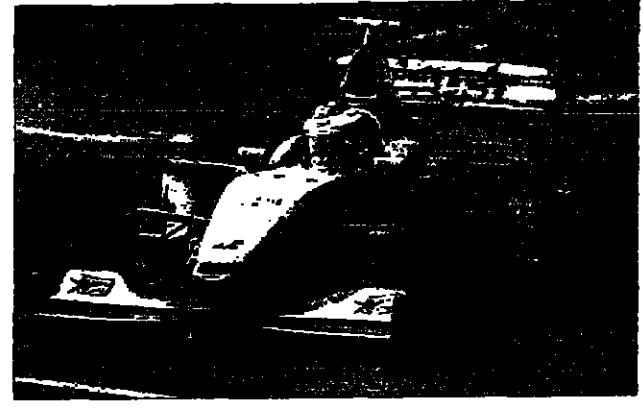
"I don't have a very good record here so I just hope I can change all that tomorrow."

Coulthard, in contrast, was desperately disappointed.

"At the end of the day I didn't get the result I wanted," he said.

"I can't complain about the conditions and the traffic on the circuit, it was just a case of trying to get a complete lap in."

"It is a case of what might have been, but now I have



Formula One driver Mika Hakkinen of Finland drives to take the pole position at the end of the qualifying session in Monaco (Reuters photo)

got to turn my thoughts to the race. Anything can happen in Monaco."

Giancarlo Fisichella of Italy was third-fastest in his Benetton after being quickest in the morning session, with two-time world champion Michael Schumacher of Germany fourth-fastest in his Ferrari.

Schumacher has won this race three of the last four years. It was no surprise to see Hakkinen and Coulthard qualify 1-2 as they continued to exert an iron grip on the season.

The pair pushed each other to the limit as they battled to grab the initiative. In the morning, Coulthard lost his rear wing when he went backwards into the guard-rail, while Hakkinen twice slid along the metal barriers.

Rosset missed out for the second race in a row after failing to get within 107 per cent of Hakkinen's time. The Brazilian drove into a guard-rail as he tried to improve his time.

Sunday's race, the sixth of the championship, will be held over 78 laps of the 3.367km street circuit, a total of 262.626km.

'Radical Changes' to 1999 Grand Prix Schedule — Mosley

MONTE CARLO (AFP) — A Formula One Grand Prix in China is "top of the list" of plans for a radically-revised 1999 schedule, Max Mosley, president of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), said Saturday.

Mosley told a press conference at the Monaco Grand Prix that there would be "one or two more races" in South East Asia and that South Africa was "very high on the list" to hold a Grand Prix again after an absence of several years.

He admitted it was a difficult balancing act for the FIA to make the championship "more worldwide" by adding new races, notably in Asia, while not "destroying the traditional races" in Europe.

An outline calendar, which could be "radically different" to the pattern over recent years, may be settled at the FIA World Council's meeting in June, Mosley said.

There will not be an extra race this year to fill the five-week gap at the end of the season between the European and Japanese Grands Prix, Mosley said, because the teams had contracted for only 16 races.

"There are negotiations now as to whether we have 16 or 17 races next year," Mosley said.

On other subjects, Mosley said that his lawyers had forbidden him to make any comment on the difficult relations between the FIA and European Union Competitions Commissioner Karel van Miert.

Specifically, he would not comment on reports that he and Grand Prix supremo Bernie Ecclestone were preparing to sue van Miert and the EU for up to \$1 billion.

Reports have said they were alleging that lack of action on investigations by van Miert into alleged monopoly action in Formula One television marketing had delayed the planned flotation of Ecclestone's Formula One interests, in which the FIA would have a large interest.

Mosley said only that he "expected some developments soon" in relations with the EU.

Mosley argued that the domination of Formula One by McLaren this year and the lack of overtaking was not reducing the entertainment level of the sport.

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Iraq presses U.N. to approve aid plan, launches another mission to lift sanctions

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq's U.N. representative Nizar Hamdun has urged Secretary General Kofi Annan to approve the new humanitarian aid plan for the sanctions-hit country, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said Saturday.

Approval of the plan by Mr. Annan is linked to approval of a new ceiling of oil exports that Iraq is permitted to export under oil-for-food deal.

"The new distribution plan is still being reviewed," U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said Friday. "The review seems to be going well and may be concluded by early next week."

The new proposal would allow Iraq to export \$5.2

billion of crude oil every six months, up from two billion dollars now.

The oil-for-food accord, launched in December 1996, allows Baghdad to finance imports of food, medicine and other supplies through oil sales.

Sanctions in force since Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until Baghdad is declared free of weapons of mass destruction.

Meanwhile, Iraq is launching a new diplomatic campaign to get crippling U.N. sanctions lifted with a series of high-level visits to several Asian and Latin American countries.

Iraq's parliamentary speaker Saadun Hamadi left Baghdad on Saturday

for India and Malaysia with messages for their leaders from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, INA said.

Oil Minister Mohammed Rashid is also due to visit Beijing for talks on the role of China, one of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council that has adopted a more favourable line towards Baghdad, sources here said.

A high-level delegation will also travel to Yemen to discuss the possibility of launching a campaign of pressure on Arab states to get the embargo lifted, the officials said, and an Iraqi envoy is expected to tour several Latin American nations soon.

S. Arabia signs cooperation agreement with Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Saudi Arabia signed a technical and industrial co-operation agreement with Iran Saturday, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported.

The agreement provides for joint investments in Iran's copper industry and the construction of thermal power stations, the news agency said without giving further details.

Saudi Arabia has bought \$40 million of copper cable from Iran over the past three years, a visiting Saudi official told Agence France Presse.

Reza Aql Mohammad Aguil, director of the Saudi Petrochemical and Metallurgical Industries Group signed the co-operation agreement with Chams

Ardakani, secretary general of Iran's chamber of commerce, IRNA reported.

Relations between Riyadh and Tehran have improved considerably since the election twelve months ago as Iranian president of moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami and the holding in Tehran in December of an Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit.

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal is expected on an official visit here in the next few days and Saudi Religious Affairs Minister Abdullah Ben Abdul Muhsein Al Turki has been here since Friday for an OIC ministerial meeting.

Earlier Saturday, Iran hailed Saudi Arabia's announcement ruling "out" any foreign participation in

the 1996 bombing of a U.S. airbase in the kingdom that killed 19 U.S. airmen, following reports implicating Tehran.

"We knew from the start that the problem was internal, but evil-minded people wanted to damage Iranian-Saudi relations by insinuating that the attack was the work of Tehran," Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said.

A Saudi official for the first time Thursday acknowledged the bombing of the U.S. base in the eastern city of Dhahran "was carried out by Saudi hands."

"No foreign party had a role," Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz said in an interview with Kuwaiti daily Al Am.

Lebanon's opposition decries putting off elections in districts

BEIRUT (AP) — Opposition groups accused the Lebanese government Saturday of manipulating the first municipal elections in 35 years by delaying polls in parts of Lebanon's most populous region.

Balloting begins today in mount Lebanon, the central part of the country, and will continue on the following three Sundays in other parts of the eastern Mediterranean state. The election is considered important because it is the first that major Christians groups have not boycotted since the end of the 1975-90 civil war.

But Friday, Interior

Minister Michel Murr decided to cancel voting in eight hotly contested districts for "technical reasons," such as incomplete voters' lists. He said they would be held later.

Government opponents criticised the decision, accusing authorities of trying to keep them out of power.

"The authorities have breached the implementation of the municipalities law and infringed the right to vote," Pierre Dakdash, a Christian opposition parliament member, was quoted as saying by the Daily Star newspaper.

"The government fears the strength of the opposi-

tion" in these areas, said Mr. Dakdash, member of parliament for Baabda, one of the districts excluded from the polls.

More than 500,000 people are eligible to vote in mount Lebanon. Elections will still be held in 260 districts.

From exile in France, Gen. Michel Awn, the former army commander and a popular opposition figure among Christians, said the decision to postpone the elections was illegal.

He accused the government of postponing elections where the opposition was most likely to succeed and called on Mr. Murr to resign.

Egypt says three people in intensive care after taking Viagra

CAIRO (AFP) — Three Egyptians have been hospitalised and are still in intensive care after taking Viagra, the new miracle remedy for impotence, Health Minister Ismail Sallam announced Saturday.

The minister's statement on the Egyptian news agency MENA did not specify the nature of the health effects he said the drug had caused.

Earlier this week, Egypt banned the sale of the drug until its side-effects had been fully tested, even though the country's top religious leader had already given it the thumbs-up.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said Friday it was investigating the deaths of six people who took Viagra.

"We don't know if it was taken alone or in combination" with other drugs, the FDA spokesman said. "We are investigating."

The drug's manufacturer, Pfizer, advised the FDA of the deaths, and issued a warning Thursday against what it called inappropriate use of the drug. Pfizer noted that Viagra was not approved for use by women and could cause dangerous side effects if used with nitroglycerin and long-acting nitrates commonly used for chest pain.

Pfizer shares slipped 3-9/16 to 105-7/16 on the news of the investigation, which muted some of the enthusiasm over the new treatment and the company's financial outlook.

Sheikh Yassin to visit Iraq

CAIRO (AP) — Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, will visit Baghdad in a show of solidarity with Iraq, the London-based Al Hayat newspaper reported Saturday.

Sheikh Yassin had not been scheduled to visit Iraq during his tour of Muslim countries to promote his Islamist group.

Iraq leader Saddam Hussein invited him to "back the Iraqi people's stand against American dominance," Al Hayat quoted Sheikh Yassin's spokesman Abu Mohammad Mustafa as saying.

The date for the visit was not given.

The 61-year-old quadriplegic will travel to Iraq via Jordan. U.N. sanctions ban flights in or out of Iraq.

Sheikh Yassin is in Damascus, Syria, where he has met several Syrian officials and Palestinian opposition groups, which, like Hamas, object to the Palestinian-Israeli peace accords.

Sheikh Yassin is expected to travel to Lebanon, Pakistan and Malaysia. He has already visited Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Yemen.



UAE MUSIC AND DANCE AT THE EXPO: The hair of dancers from the United Arab Emirates blows in the breeze during a performance at the Expo 98 world exhibition Saturday. Over 150 countries and international organizations are participating in the last major fair of the 20th century, which is dedicated to the world's oceans (Reuters photo)

Tens of thousands celebrate Khatami's anniversary

TEHRAN (AFP) — Tens of thousands of Iranians packed into Tehran University on Saturday in an unprecedented public show of support for President Mohammad Khatami on the first anniversary of his landmark election victory.

"We've come to celebrate this victory for the people," one student said of Mr. Khatami's May 1997 election win, which set off a wave of political change in the Islamic republic.

Mr. Khatami's supporters waved pictures of the 55-year-old bearded cleric and gave the victory sign as they welcomed the president at the university, the scene of many political rallies since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Chants of "Khatami, Khatami, we support you" greeted the president as he rose to speak.

"We want a society based on respect for the law and for basic freedoms within the framework of the constitution," he told the adoring crowd.

"I have the firm belief that you have to regard the importance of religion from the point of view of freedom," he said.

"The art of a government lies in its ability to get its opponents to act within the framework of the constitution."

In an acknowledgment of the opposition his policies have prompted in conservative circles within the government, Khatami called for "tolerance" to be shown by all sides.

But he insisted that his govern-

ment would remain "faithful to its principles."

"Certain difficulties may slow our progress but the direction and policies will remain unchanged," he insisted.

In reference to his government's gradual rapprochement with the outside world, Mr. Khatami told the crowd: "On the basis of mutual respect, our relations with countries in the region are constantly developing."

"This will have positive effects in the political, economic and security field."

Groups of demonstrators sang popular Iranian songs and some shouted slogans hostile to members of the powerful conservative faction, which has been at loggerheads with liberal forces who are pushing for greater freedom.

"Yazdi resign," some of the crowd shouted in reference to Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, the head of Iran's conservative judiciary which angered moderates last month by arresting and briefly imprisoning Tehran mayor and prominent Khatami supporter Gholam Hussein Karbaschi.

Mr. Khatami was elected on a promise to implement political, economic and social reform and since taking office in August, he has tried to give the Islamic Republic a softer image in the world and create greater social freedoms.

He still remains immensely popular, despite limited room for manoeuvre and mounting economic difficulties. But his policies have triggered a backlash from the powerful conservative factions and orthodox Islamic forces, who purport to serve as the guardians of the principles of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Iran's moderate press is hailing the anniversary rallies as a show of popular support and allegiance to Mr. Khatami, who swept to power with 69 per cent of the vote over conservative parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri thanks to an unexpected tidal wave of support particularly among women and the young.

"May 23 is unquestionably our country's most important day since then."



Iranian President Mohammad Khatami smiles from behind the podium where he addressed the thousands of students gathered at Tehran University, Saturday (AFP photo)

because the popular will was expressed and the people made their choice," said moderate newspaper Hachmahchi.

The choice of Tehran university for the anniversary rally carries great political significance as it is now a forum for political demonstrations, sometimes violent, between supporters of the various factions of the Islamist regime.

It was the site of numerous hostile demonstrations against the Shah before the 1979 revolution and the capital's weekly Friday prayers have been held at the university's football pitch since then.

But Khatami, the vernacular leader, hailed the speed with which Mr. Khatami named his new team.

"Speed is one element needed for reforms," it said in an editorial.

Meanwhile, an international journalists' group has called upon Mr. Khatami to rescind the appointment of his new information minister, charging he was connected to the deaths of five journalists in East Timor in 1975. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said in a fax sent to Mr. Khatami that Lieutenant General Yunus Yosfiah's connection with the deaths of two Australian, two British and one New Zealand journalist had "long been on the public record."

The Committee, citing a report by the London Independent, said that Yosfiah, as a 31-year-old major, commanded a marine corps unit which in October of 1975 killed the five while they were covering the Indonesian military occupation of East Timor, a former Portuguese colony.

Senior Indonesian minister backs fresh elections as soon as possible

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's chief economic minister, Ginjar Kartasasmita, said Saturday it was imperative for the country to have fresh elections as soon as possible to give the government a fresh mandate.

"We need to have a new government with a new mandate from the people and this new mandate is given through general elections," Mr. Ginjar told journalists after being reappointed by new President B. J. Habibie.

Mr. Ginjar, whose official title is co-ordinating minister of the economy, finance and industry, said he was only expressing his "personal views" since his competence was in the economic field.

"It is very important that we have a general election as soon as possible," he said.

Mr. Ginjar said that political reforms should go hand-in-hand with economic reforms if the country wanted to overcome its current crisis.

He and 35 other ministers were Saturday sworn in as members of the "Development

Reform Cabinet" of Mr. Habibie, who took over the reins of the world's fourth largest nation from veteran leader Mr. Suharto on Thursday.

Mr. Suharto stepped down Thursday after a wrenching economic crisis exploded into protests and rioting that left 500 dead in Jakarta last week.

The Habibie cabinet was inaugurated after an overnight military operation cleared the parliament complex of 2,000 students who have rejected the Habibie succession and called for new elections. While some Suharto loyalists remained in the cabinet, two notable names closely linked with the excesses of the old regime were excluded.

Former vice president Habibie dumped Mr. Suharto's daughter Sidi "Tutut" Hardiyanti Rukmana as social affairs minister, and also excluded the former leader's golfing buddy, timber tycoon Mohammad "Bob" Hasan, who was trade and industry minister.

Many Indonesians have crit-

icised the sudden handing over of power to Mr. Habibie as unconstitutional and have called for fresh polls to elect a new legislature which will pick a new national leadership as soon as possible.

Under the constitution, the president and vice president are chosen every five years by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), which gave Mr. Suharto and Mr. Habibie five-year terms only last March.

The English-language Jakarta Post in an editorial said the new cabinet fell far short of what the current situation required.

It said the cabinet, though not perceived to be "as corrupt, collusive and nepotistic as the last Suharto Cabinet, fell far short of what is needed to accelerate the overall process and to lead a paralysed economy into a robust recovery."

The Post said that "still more discouraging" was the reappointment of ministers "whose major qualification is seen as simply their loyalty to Suharto."

But Kompas, the vernacular leading daily, hailed the speed with which Mr. Habibie named his new team.

"Speed is one element needed for reforms," it said in an editorial.

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Ottawa's frivolties

Ottawa (R) — Interesting dressing up like a woman from nineteenth century Istanbul? The Canadian government has spent \$28,000 to help you figure out what to wear. Or if you were itching to know about "feasting and the origin of inequality," Ottawa has forked out \$75,000 to research that magnetic topic. It even paid \$33,700 to discover the "northern Malagasy constructions of self, society and history."

Politician John Williams, who dubs himself the "waste watchdog," also cited what he calls the \$200,000 "binder blunder" in which the money was used to provide an information kit about working in rural communities to all of Canada's 301 members of parliament.

For Stone, no babies, just sex

CANNES (AFP) — Hollywood star Sharon Stone was a smash hit along the Croisette as she arrived for the screening of her latest movie, Peter Chelom's "The Mighty," given a special show at the Cannes Film Festival. Crowds pressed against the crush barriers to rubber-neck as she stepped out of her limousine, and stuck around for two hours to catch a glimpse of her climbing back in. "If it is as rewarding as it was to play a mother, then it's got to be good," said the actress who plays a mom in "The Mighty." Asked if she and her husband had any plans on that front she laughed: "You know, we just have sex constantly."

Willis gig

ZURICH (AFP) — Actor Bruce Willis ducked out of the Cannes film festival this week to rush to the rescue of Zurich's cash-strapped floundering restaurant Planet Hollywood. Willis's cunning plan to boost the restaurant's coffers came in the shape of a harmonica which he played to draw in the punters Sunday, accompanied by a 12-person group. The Accelerators. The actor's session in Zurich was part of a Europe-wide tour of Planet Hollywood restaurants.

Hollywood star Richard Gere defends Indian N-tests

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hollywood star and Buddhist Richard Gere defended India's nuclear tests, applauding the government for standing up to "bully and trouble-maker" China. "I see nothing wrong with India giving a notice to the world that it is under threat, and the real threat is China," Gere told the Times of India in an interview. Gere, a follower of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, backed Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's decision to cite the nuclear threat from China as justification for the tests. "I find the Indian stand encouraging and applaud the prime minister of India for having the courage to tell the world the truth," he added.

Queen mum launches Scotia

ABERDEEN (AP) — The 97-year-old Queen Mother Elizabeth was back in brisk form on Thursday for her first public engagement in Scotland since a hip replacement in January. The Queen Mother, naming a new marine research vessel in Aberdeen, looked cheerful and no longer leaned heavily on her walking stick. The hugely popular mother of Queen Elizabeth II unveiled a plaque that will be placed in the new ship Scotia.

Israeli camp... to settle more

Volume 23 Number 684

Jordan celebrates 52 years independence

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ZURICH (AFP) — Actor Bruce Willis ducked out of the Cannes film festival this week to rush to the rescue of Zurich's cash-strapped floundering restaurant Planet Hollywood. Willis's cunning plan to boost the restaurant's coffers came in the shape of a harmonica which he played to draw in the punters Sunday, accompanied by a 12-person group. The Accelerators. The actor's session in Zurich was part of a Europe-wide tour of Planet Hollywood restaurants.

Hollywood star Richard Gere defends Indian N-tests

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hollywood star and Buddhist Richard Gere defended India's nuclear tests, applauding the government for standing up to "bully and trouble-maker" China. "I see nothing wrong with India giving a notice to the world that it is under threat, and the real threat is China," Gere told the Times of India in an interview. Gere, a follower of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, backed Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's decision to cite the nuclear threat from China as justification for the tests. "I find the Indian stand encouraging and applaud the prime minister of India for having the courage to tell the world the truth," he added.

Queen mum launches Scotia

ABERDEEN (AP) — The 97-year-old Queen Mother Elizabeth was back in brisk form on Thursday for her first public engagement in Scotland since a hip replacement in January. The Queen Mother, naming a new marine research vessel in Aberdeen, looked cheerful and no longer leaned heavily on her walking stick. The hugely popular mother of Queen Elizabeth II unveiled a plaque that will be placed in the new ship Scotia.

Israeli hold 10 workers wounded

THE first military parade in Israel for 25 years, thousands of soldiers marched across the city on Sunday as part of celebrating Israel's 50th anniversary. The parade was held in Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish state, and was attended by thousands of people. The parade was held in the city of Jerusalem, which is the capital of the Jewish state, and was attended by thousands of people. The parade was held in the city of Jerusalem, which is the capital of the Jewish state, and was attended by thousands of people.